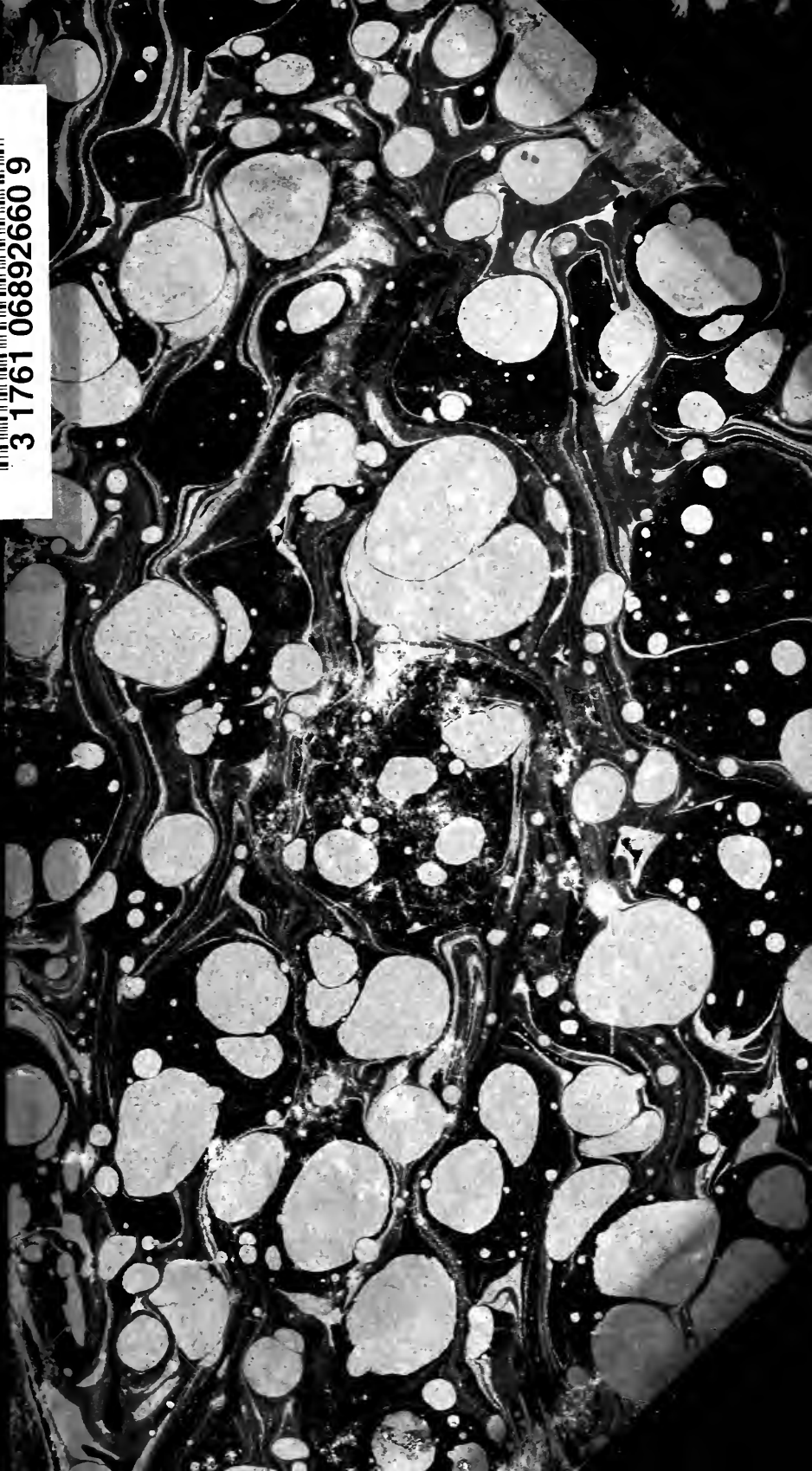
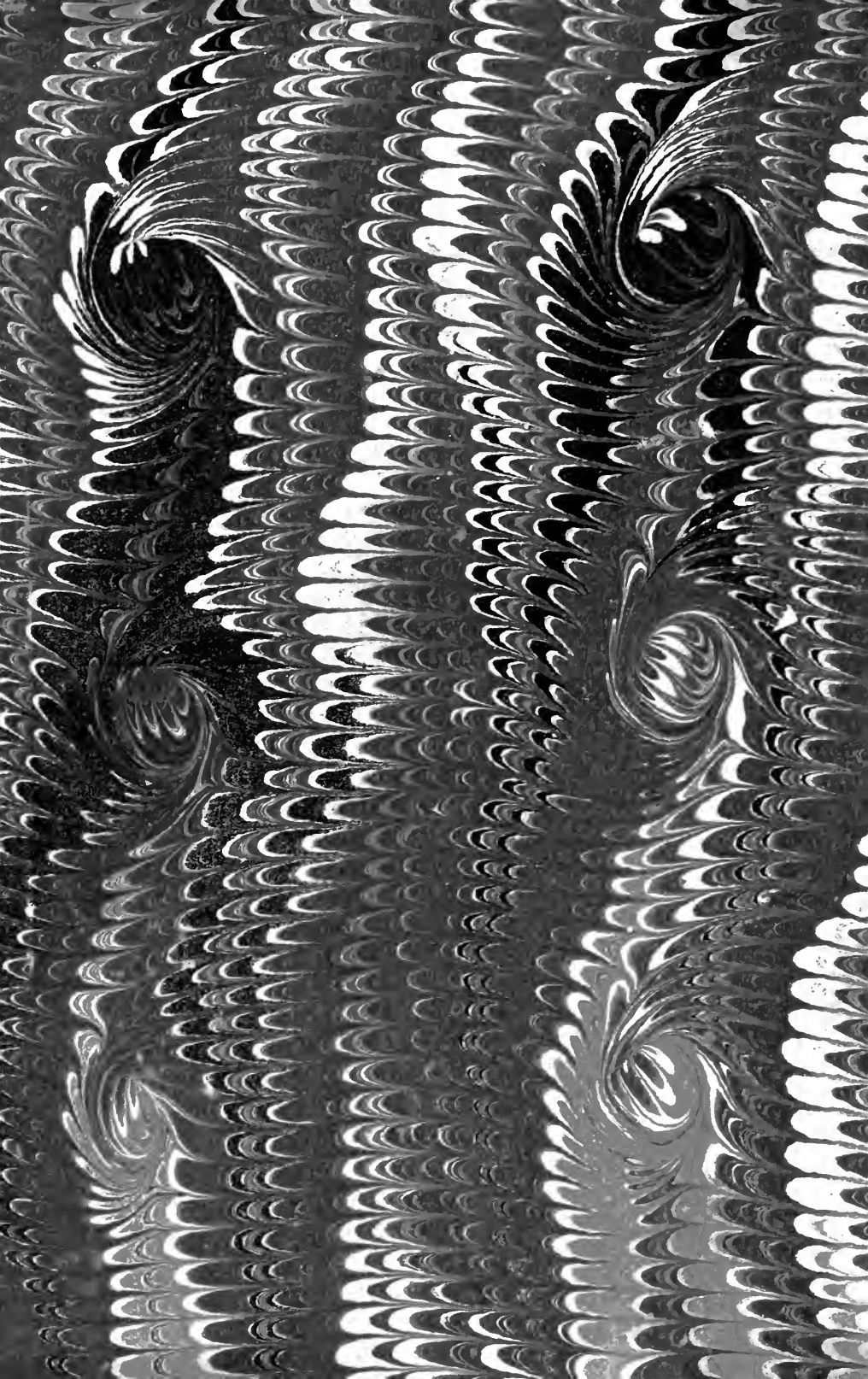
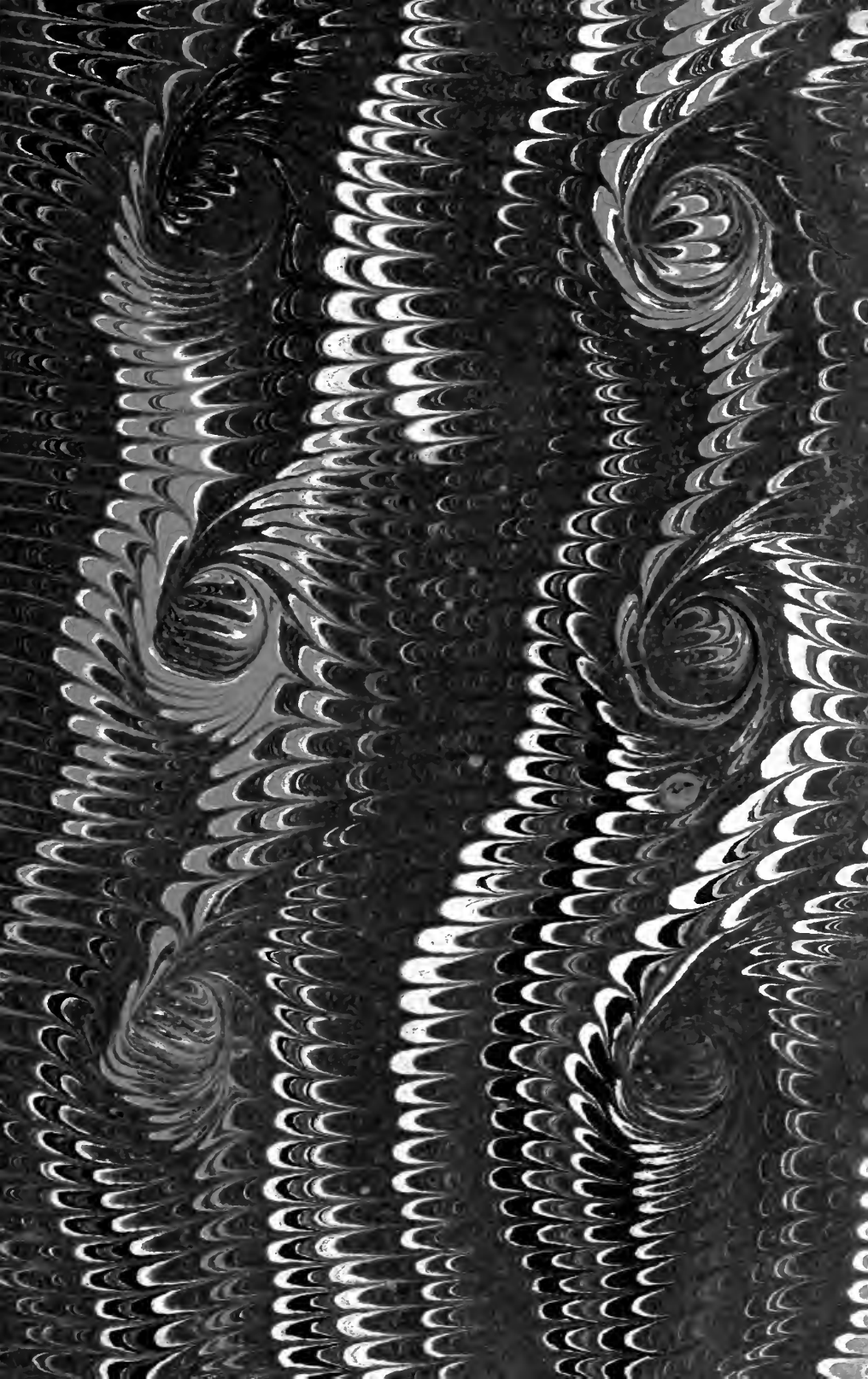




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MR. & MRS. C.S. MARTIN

THE ADVENTURES
OF
DOCTOR BRADY.

BY
WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF
"LETTERS FROM THE CRIMEA," "MY DIARY IN INDIA," "MY DIARY NORTH AND SOUTH,"
ETC.

NEW EDITION.

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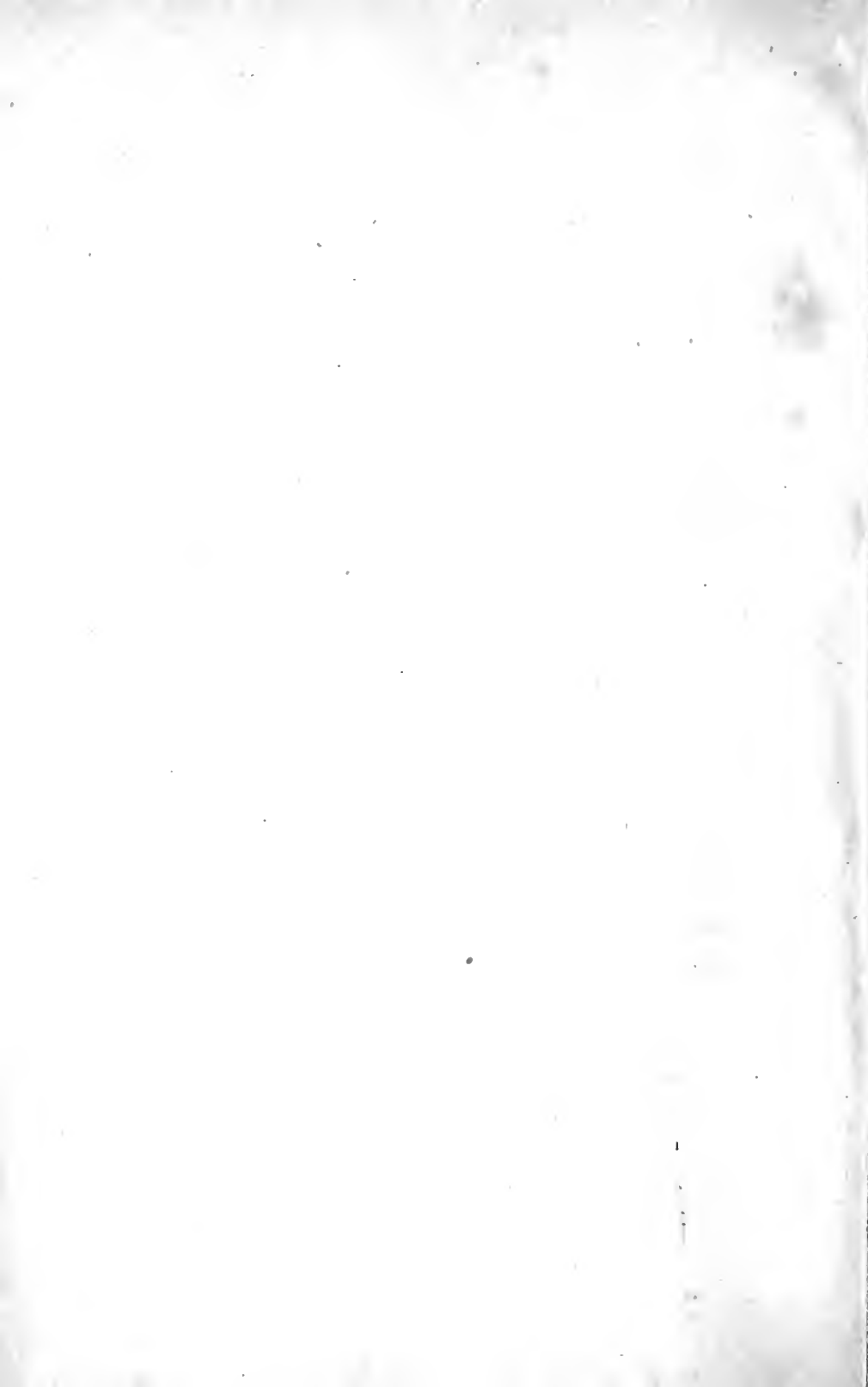
TO
GENERAL SIR DE LACY EVANS

This Volume is Dedicated,

IN MEMORY OF A VALUED FRIENDSHIP,

BY
THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *March*, 1868.



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THE ADVENTURES OF DOCTOR BRADY.

CHAPTER I.

"MYSELF."

THEY speak of "the mist of years." Is it not rather a dense dark cloud, through the ever-closing chinks in which one seeks in vain to discern clearly all the outlines of the scenery he has left behind him, and to follow the exact course of the path which has been trodden once and is never to be retraced? To my eyes, at least, as I look back there seems a thick veil up-reared, through rifts in which I can obtain but glimpses of the past. I am still at that time of life which men of middle age term its prime, but I attempt unavailingly to recall the shapes and forms which once filled the whole expanse of my little world. The recollections of our childhood are like those we retain of last night's sunset. We remember the beauty which floated in the air in all its golden glories—the rapt delight with which we gazed on the subtle play of light tinted with the hues of heaven, but we cannot summon each element to take its original order in the mutations and progress of the glowing pageant. We can only think of the general impression produced, or dwell on some particular combination perhaps, which lasted for a moment, just as a ruined castle, a clump of trees in a landscape, or an incident in a day's travel, are fixed in the mind when all beside that pleased us is forgotten.

My most ancient memory is of a tender, large-eyed face, for which I had a passion when I was about four years old. I remember well the grey eyes, the low, broad brow with bands of black hair surmounted by a white cap, as the Alpine pine-belt is crowned by snowfields—a face, whose expression hour after hour was the source of infinite joy or distress to me; but I cannot remember

much more of Honour Flynn, my nurse, than that she was strong of hand and fleet of foot, and that some years later I struggled with exceeding vehemence and wrath to disentangle myself from the embrace of a woman with a freckled face, who caressed me, while great tears rolled down her nose, exclaiming,—“ Masther Terry, sure it's your own Honour ! your own dear nurse, Honour, darlin', that you used to love so.”

Alas ! that love had all died out ; four years had made a clean sweep of my young affection, and I was almost angry with myself for ever having allowed such a coarse person to have been on intimate terms with me. I can remember, too, a little lake, surrounded by trees, set in the midst of a great meadow, beyond which I can see “our house ;” and between me and the lake a swift rivulet, filled with watercresses and sticklebacks, which rippled away over a tiny bar of sand into the larger stream that flowed into the lake. There is a white-headed old man, in a grey coat, with its tails in the water, standing out, as it appears to me, in dreadful depths, waving over his head a whip-like wand of vast proportions, from which flies out in long curves a thin line, flashing on the surface of the stream. There is a spluttering and a plunging after a time at the end of the line, and Macarthy retreats to the bank.

“ There, Masther Terry ; there's a purty throu't for ye ! Whist till I get the hook out ov him, that he mightn't hurt ye wid the teeth ov him. Put yer purty little finger in his gill. There ! why he's as long as yerself, a'most ! Maybe ye'd like to take him up, and show him to the quality, alannah ? He's a bewtiful two pounds, that he is. Ould Dan is able to put the comether on them still.”

I see that monster of the deep yet : his speckled sides glistening with orange, red, and brown ; his awful rows of teeth, his curving snout, his goggle eyes, and velvety dark red gills ; and I remember, too, the roar of terror I gave, and the precipitate flight I made through the meadow from the spot where, with a sudden wriggle—recovering a moment's breath ere he died—he flopped his wet tail against my legs, and wallopped in the long grass. I can remember, also, the face of an auburn-haired boy, striving to dash away the firm hand which sought to give an extra polish to its shining skin, reflected in the little mirror in my tiny bed-room, and the secret marches I used to make to gaze on the same portrait, wondering if it ever would be like Dan Macarthy, or old Dr. Noble, whom I had heard once informing the company after dinner that he was the image of me when he was of the same age. I have a photograph taken for my daughter, which tells me that I have since become alarmingly like Dr. Noble, whom at that time

I regarded as the greatest sayer of the thing which was not, recorded in any of the story books I had made acquaintance with. It was, I confess, a very great comfort in those days to me to think that by no possibility could I ever become so ridiculously old as Dan Macarthy or Dr. Noble; and from time to time I confirmed any doubts I might have had on the subject by consulting the glass again, flying furtively away when a footstep approached, as if I had an innate consciousness that it was a sin and a shame to look at oneself, as Honour assured me it was. But I was full of sin and shame; my youthful life was stained with them; and conscience frowned at many undetected crimes, in regard to cream and sugar, which never came to light. If I were to set out to catch all the fleeting memories which are passing now, as the shadows of clouds glide over the fields, you would scarce care to join me in the chase. Let me come to the days when life itself began to write its records in those early characters which survive later-formed alphabets. The stems of the long grass seem still to twine round my feet as I think of an early morning walk with a ruddy-faced hale old man and the dainty little maiden, on which occasion one of my great offences was detected and punished.

It was a morning so bright and joyous that the exuberance of the blessing causes a fuller beating of the heart and an indefinable sense of happiness and gratitude! Little Mary Butler had been sent over from "the Castle" to stay with us till the "new governess" came. The governesses came and went very often at that time, when little Mary was young and wayward and Sir Richard was at home.

Mary, kindest and most winning of infant women, had kept her promise, made over our morning meal of "stirabout and milk," and had asked grandfather to let us go and see him fish in the Carra.

"It's that terrible young serpent, Terry, who has put you up to it, Mary. Besides, you'll get your feet wet."

"No, *indeed—indeed*, Doctor, I'll give you my honour," she exclaimed, putting her hand on a puckered plait of white muslin, "I won't; and I won't let Terry fall into the river."

"Oh! in that case, if you give me your honour," quoth my grandfather, gravely, "tell Dan to get the rod. I really will take you both down to the Carra and kill a trout for you."

"Kill—I don't like killing," lisped little Mary. "That was what Cain did to Abel. But I'll look at you catching them."

"But trout are not Abels, my dear," said grandpapa, smiling. "And besides, they deserve killing because of all the innocent creatures they kill on their own account."

The Carra was a forbidden thing. I always longed to get near it. But the brink was tabooed ever after I had been forked one day out of a whirling pool by Dan Macarthy. Many a time since then had I stolen down to it, crouching in the meadows to watch the tremendous tenants of its waters in their splendour, when, detected and pursued, I had been seized by the still more tremendous Honour, swift of foot and strong of hand, and the dreadful words rang in my ear, "Masther Terry, *this* time I'll shurely tell yer granddada." But I had seen the stream and listened to its music. I had gazed on the minnows floating, circling, sailing, darting, and quivering in the watery crystal, and watched them fly in scurrying fright over the pebbles as the king of all the sticklebacks, with red gills and breast, and flashing eyes and bristling spines, made a fierce foray on the covenanting congregation from his lair beneath the bulrush, or a tyrant trout slid from the outer deeps and dashed in a hungry swirl through their ranks.

I was anxious to explain all the wonders of my particular deep to my companion. And so, as the old squire walked along before us, casting his line in vain, for the water was bright and low, and the fish glinted away before him, we two, hand in hand, wandered on and on, Mary picking flowers, and I loitering on purpose, and seeking to avoid old Dan, who had strict orders not to let us "tumble in," and who dogged our footsteps like fate.

"Dan!" said I, "there's the squire calling" (Dan was a little deaf). "Don't you hear him?"

Mary looked at me with wondering eyes, and listened too.

"I don't hear your grandpapa calling, Terence," she said, quietly.

"Ah! but I do, Mary. There! there! he's shouting for you, Dan." And as the old fellow, after waiting a minute with his hand to his ear, caught in the hollow of it the rumble of the breeze, and started off, I whispered, laughingly—"Now, you see, he's gone. The squire's ever so far away, and we'll have five minutes to ourselves. Come along this way."

"And the squire didn't call?" asked Mary, as she drew herself up, and threw back her head, and stared me full in the face. "Do you mean to say, Terence, you've told—a fib?" she gasped.

"Why, Mary, it's only out of fun—only to make old Dan run away, and to be able to bring you quite close to the water to show you something. Come till you see," and I held out my hand.

But she was gone; flying as fast as her little legs could carry her after Dan, and sobbing out, "Oh! wicked, wicked Terry, to tell such a fib!" as she flew.

I was astonished, and stood still for a moment ; but as Dan was now coming back for me, I trotted along the path, little caring for his menacing fist in the air, and his scolding for my "thricks ;" and striving in vain to make friends with Mary, who, with averted face, kept close to my grandfather, and seemed only intent on adding to the store of primroses and daisies in her lap. There was an expression of deep sorrow and pity on her little face, and when after a time I asked—"Do, Mary, please do make friends with me !" she replied, "No !—not till you have said your prayers to-night, and have shown you are sorry for telling a fib like that, Terence !" What a hard-hearted moralist she was, and how sorry I felt she had such strict views, as it quite spoiled a series of the splendid jokes I intended to practice with her assistance. That was a very bitter day to me ; and when my grandfather, halting for a moment to exhibit a fish he had caught, exclaimed, "Why, Terry ! you and Mary are as quiet as mice ; what's the matter with you, children ?"

I felt my face glow with a tingling blush as I stammered, "Mary's cross with me for something, and won't play with me !"

"Eh !—Mary cross ? Why, it's you who look more like cross than she does ! What is this all about ?" exclaimed the old gentleman, pausing in the act of changing a fly, and scrutinizing us through his spectacles—"Has he been teasing you, my dear ?"

"Oh ! no, indeed, dear Doctor !" she said, with her arms folding her apron full of flowers to her heart, so that her face just surmounted the heap—"Terence hasn't teased me at all. He is very good and kind—that is, he meant it for fun, and to please me—Oh, sir !" she cried, suddenly clasping her hands together, and letting all the flowers tumble to her feet, "don't be angry—but Terence vexed me because he told a fib—he's sorry now, I'm sure, and he'll promise never to do it again if you forgive him. Won't you, Terry ?" she added, turning on me a look of entreaty I can recollect as if it were yesterdsy.

"A fib !—hem—a fib !" quoth my grandfather, with a "March-brown" between his fingers ; "that is indeed very wrong. What was it ? More white than black, I hope. Come, as you have begun you must go on with it, Mary, you know. Perhaps it's a hanging matter, and in that case we can march the culprit off at once !" he added, with an odd look about his face, "for I'm a magistrate, you know."

Miss Mary Butler, with some hesitation of speech, and a few glances at me, which said very plainly she was sorry for me but must do her duty, then laid before his worship with minute detail

the whole of my monstrous wickedness. I felt guilty to the soles of my feet; I dared not look up.

"Although I told him I did not hear you calling before Dan began to run," she concluded.

"Phew!" whistled the Doctor, softly; "was ever a more terrible case than this? I wonder where this dreadful boy got such naughty ideas, and where on earth, my dear Mary, you were taught such a love of truth? Not at the castle, I'll be bound. No, indeed—no, indeed," he said, putting his hand over her dark curls; "from Nature, my child. You are your mother's true daughter, and she had a monopoly of the good qualities of half your house, at all events. And now," he continued, turning to me, "you see, Terry, how you have disgraced yourself! You can only be sorry now, and promise to tell no more fibs; but there is no use in doing that unless you mean to keep your word."

Was I not very sorry? And was I not very glad when Mary took my hand and asked me not to be angry with her, "because she could not help it"?

Many a day has that scene on the Carra returned to me, and I have smiled at the recollection of everything about it except my little companion's gravity, and the earnestness of her face, and the great contentment of heart when all was at an end. The lesson was too slight and the matter too trifling to cause a deeper impression; and my grandfather's twinkling eye and smiling mouth told me I had done no great harm after all.

The old mansion, which was dignified by the name of Bradystown House, and a few hundred acres of what looked like a remanet from the deluge—for a duck might consider it land and a hen might regard it as water—were all that remained to the family (of which my grandfather declared he was the head in those parts) of a good slice of the county that had once been theirs. The house was a great block of red brick, with stone copings and a stucco portico, to which an extremely unfinished look was given by a small wing at one side, which the last of the O'Brady's had not lived—or indeed, had he lived, would not have had the money—to complete. The edifice was only commenced in the beginning of the last century, after the "castle" had been destroyed by a lieutenant of De Ginkel, on his march to the Shannon, in order to punish the owner, who had joined King James. The ruins of the castle were near at hand, and a portion of them served to close in the garden walls, and were useful as cellars and as winter-sheds for cattle.

The house stood on a gentle elevation amid a few old trees, in which a scanty array of faithful rooks still found refuge,

unseduced by the ampler accommodation of the woods around the residence of Sir Richard Desmond. Before the windows an ill-kempt lawn, given up to pasturage, which rejoiced in the title of "The demesne," gradually melted into the waters of the lough, that spread away till it merged in the "Bay of Carra" on one side, and on the other opening into a series of large pools, received the waters of the river, draining the higher ridges of a great range of hills, on a spur of which the architect had raised the family mansion. There was little, indeed, of the land which belonged to us that a farmer would have called "land" at all. All the good acreage had gone bit by bit; sometimes the bits were very large. Sir Richard's drainage operations had delivered his fields of the water, which was accorded so liberally to ours that it would be hard to believe there was a drop of moisture left on his farms. A few wretched peasants held their little patches of moor, rather as tenants by courtesy of the landlord than by any monetary acknowledgment of their obligations as occupants of arable and pasturage. Their dwellings, scattered over the bog amid patches of green, which marked the reclaimed land—or rather, the soil not yet gone to waste—were like huge manure heaps or exaggerated ant-hills: brown tumuli without form, but by no means void, for each of the tenants would have thought himself poor indeed if he had not a family of many children, to be used as so many arrows in his quiver when doing battle with "the masther" or the agent about an imaginary payment of rent.

And how had all this come about? Well, it is a long story, and it took some hundreds of years to furnish the materials for it. But in effect the latter part of the tale was this:—

Maurice O'Brady, by marriage with one of the Desmonds in the later days of Elizabeth, managed to recover the smallest of the estates which his father had forfeited by his forced complicity in O'Neil's rebellion. He was sent abroad when a child, to be made a good Catholic; but in his wanderings, ere he was of age, he had sojourned at the university of Prague, and had distinguished himself after a time by his physical zeal in the tumults which arose between the orthodox and the new lights of the time on the side of the latter, so that his father, who was living in seclusion and "*making his soul*" among the friars of the Irish Benedictines at Paris, took much comfort to himself that he had no lands left for such a reprobate Hussite and heretic to enjoy. But a little later, when Maurice, joining the Imperialists, gained a name for himself as a brave soldier to which in a few years he added the reputation of a skilful captain, the old man rejoiced that his son was fighting like a good Catholic Christian after all; and bemoaned the evil

fortunes of his house and the cowardice of the kernes, which had given Essex such easy victories, and left the O'Bradys of Lough-na-Carra nothing but bitter memories and broken fortunes. When his father died, Maurice's heritage was a small sum of money and a solemn entreaty that he would return to his native country.

"Do not let the name die out. If we all go, it is what the enemy want. We must be politic, Maurice—be politic, and watch and wait. If the lion sees the hunter he will kill him ; but if the hunter is wary, watches, and waits, the beast is his at last."

A friend of Sidney, whom Maurice saved in a sudden rout of the Christians by the banks of the Leytha, repaid him by obtaining grace and pardon for the offence of being an impenitent rebel's son. Nay, the Lord Deputy himself did not hesitate to express his opinion, that Captain Maurice Brady might render good service to his royal mistress if only he were taken into her gracious favour, as he was a gentleman of conduct and courage, with a fitting sense of the errors of his unhappy father, and in no way to be regarded as a "Papist enemy." In fact, Maurice Brady, who at this time made his name a dissyllable, was even permitted to appear at the court of the Queen ; and, in two years after his return, was fortunate enough to marry a younger daughter of one of the Desmonds, among the most powerful of the old families of the Pale. Two years later a grant—not without much outcry from the Irish Parliament—put him in possession of a share of his family estates. It was understood that Maurice Brady was almost as good as a Protestant, and that he only waited for a fair occasion to declare it to the world. But the occasion never came ; and by his neighbours of Norman and English descent he was regarded as little better than a common Irish traitor. Living among a barbarous people, or at least a race whose civilization he did not understand, and whose language was unknown to him, the travelled soldier became overwhelmed with *ennui*. There was more than a suspicion that he was cognizant of the Irish rising in the reign of James ; and Maurice, whose wife had died after giving birth to an only son, sailed from Galway to a Spanish port, leaving his heir in the care of his brother-in-law ; and, re-entering the Imperialist service, was killed in the decisive charge at the battle of the White Mount.

Terence, his son, was brought up in the traditions of the Desmonds, and was educated in England. After a boisterous youth, he married a lady of the house of the Lucys of Warwickshire, and fell in the Civil War, fighting, with the perversity of his race, for the King.

Of his two sons and three daughters none ever saw the land of

their ancestors except one, Gerald, the second son, who, through the exertions of his English friends, got possession of Lough-na-Carra and Kilmoyle at the close of the reign of Charles II. Gerald subsequently showed his gratitude by joining the Royalists at the summons of Tyrconnel, a few days before the arrival of James in Ireland, and his judgment by the loss of his lands. He was one of the garrison of Limerick, and died in exile in France; and it was not till the reign of Anne that his elder brother, who joined the winning side and the victorious faith, was rewarded by the restoration of a small portion of the land of Lough-na-Carra, and the ruins of the old castle. But Miles Brady had married an heiress, and he resolved to build a fine house in the midst of his people, whom he proposed to civilize, having all that faith in Saxonizing the Celts which has done so little good, and so much evil, in time past. His efforts were not successful; his money and his time went in vain. He found a stiff-necked generation, whose ways were not his ways; and after a few weary years of toil, he left his tenants unconverted and his house unfinished; returned to England in disgust, became one of an active knot of Whig pamphleteers and wits, who met in a coffee-house near Lincoln's-Inn Fields; wrote many forgotten papers; engaged in many broils and squabbles; and died of a wound received in a street quarrel, coming out of Drury Lane.

It was an unlucky house; what one of them gained the next was sure to lose; not one of the line for years had been brought up in his own country, or had any feelings or sympathies with his own people. They drew as much money as they could get, and spent it. What else could a gentleman do, unless he were a rebel? And no one in those days could tell what loyalty or treason was till the definition had been sharply drawn by the sword, or by the decision of the majority (represented by the force) of the people on the other side of the Channel.

My grandfather, Dr. Terence Brady, succeeded to all that was left of the ever-diminishing estates of Lough-na-Carra, on the death of his uncle, and during one of those terrible visitations of typhus which in the old time did the work now performed by emigration, and in its own way checked the increase of population, was summoned from his modest practice as a Dublin physician to deal with a pauper, disaffected population. After his wife fell a victim to the pestilence he only redoubled his exertions, and found a solace for his sorrows in seeking to mitigate the sufferings of others, and in the care of his infant son.

When the rebels of '98 laid waste the houses of the gentry they respected Lough-na-Carra; and the Doctor's loyalty was rather

doubted at Dublin Castle when they heard the "Croppies" had not only spared Dr. Brady's house, but had insisted on carrying him on their shoulders from the village—where they found him attending on a dying man—and mounted guard on his gate till they moved off to join the main body of the insurgents. There was not wanting evidence, however, that he had urged them, with tears in his eyes, to desist; and had, unarmed in the midst of their leaders, warned them of their failure and their fate. I can fancy he was eloquent; and I know, indeed, that he was asked to take his place in the Irish Parliament by men who believed his abilities would have secured him a commanding position in political life. But he was fond of his books and of the country, and of doing good, the results of which he could see with his own eyes. The great object of his life was to get Lough-na-Carra into order for his son, who entered the army at the age of sixteen. One sad day the postboy stopped "the Doctor's gig" on the road, and gave him a letter with a great black seal. My grandfather, driving back to the house, and walking into the hall, said calmly to the old housekeeper, "He's gone! My poor son! The widow and her infant are coming here to their only home. They are on their way now. My darling Jack! To die in an Indian jungle! It is hard, indeed, to bear. But God's will be done!"

I have heard that from the day the news came he was a changed man; but I cannot fancy he could have ever been more gentle, more kind, or more cheerful than he was as I remember him.

CHAPTER II.

AT HOME.

IT was some months after this that a postchaise drove up to the door of the "Desmond Arms," in the town of Kilmoyle, an event which excited no small sensation in that very unflourishing place. Not that the postchaise was a novelty—or the horses or the postboy—for every one knew Mrs. Dempsey's "quality carriage"—the Roman-nosed, high-boned steeds, had a world-wide reputation for their prowess in kicking, biting, and jumping, and were popularly believed to have been discharged from the mail-coach service for an inveterate habit of galloping; and "ould Pat," the postboy, was better known than any milestone on the turnpike road—but that the occupants of the vehicle seemed worthy of much popular wonder. The first and most attractive of these was a woman—at least the current opinion was in favour of the belief that the person in question was a female with a dark-brown

face and white teeth, and a small nose on which there was a streak of yellow paint. Through the straight belt of black curls which escaped from the folds of a monster turban of white and red, were visible two massive ear-rings; a thin white and scarlet jacket, looped at the neck, permitted a large extent of dark skin to be seen in the region of the breast, under which the jacket was gathered in by a thick shawl folded round the waist, and thence emerging came down to the knees. As the owner of the curls and ear-rings stepped out of the carriage, the multitude, which consisted by this time of at least two thirds of Kilmoyle, who were old or young enough to run, and who were within half a mile of the "Desmond Arms," beheld with amazement and delight, below the short white drawers completing the stranger's costume, a pair of small brown bandy legs and large brown flat feet, on the little toes of which were two silver rings; and their excitement was at its height when a roll of white linen which was borne tenderly in the arms of the strange being emitted a shrill cry, as like that of a Christian baby as any of the many matrons there familiar with the sound had ever heard. That cry was uttered by me, Terence Brady, awakened out of a very comfortable sleep, no doubt by Mohun's descent to the earth from the post-chaise. The emotions aroused among the crowd by the utterance might have led to an instant demand for my exposure to the air, but that a huge ape, with a silver collar and chain round his neck, which had been asleep in a corner of the carriage, made his appearance on the steps, and grinning round him, and puckering up his face, surrounded by a fringe and beard of long grey hair and sunken yellow eyes, gave a sharp whimper, and with a bound rushed after the dark stranger, jumped upon his back—for it was a he—and, with one arm round his neck, chattered defiance at the people of Kilmoyle.

The diversion was most effective, and as soon as the novel visitors were lost sight of in the passage of the inn, the popular mind was agitated by tremendous doubts on the question of identity; for the postboy assured the crowd that the party consisted of "poor Captain Brady's widdy, nurse, and child;" and that they had been given to his charge by the guard of the mail-coach from Cork, with a strict injunction to take particular care of the nurse, who was the hairy lady with the silver collar.

"I saw the child's face, anyway, and it's as white as my own,"—an illustration, by the bye, of no special note in regard to whiteness—"and I don't know how the poor Ingin widdy can be the mother, for she's as black as soot. But they've quare ways in foreign parts."

My grandfather, who had been long expecting our coming, as always happens in such cases, was taken by surprise at the message that the "captain's little son and two strange Indian gentlemen had arrived." He smiled sadly as he was pulling on his boots, and exclaimed—"Do you take poor Mrs. Brady for a gentleman, Pat?"

"Begorrah, yer honour, all I can say is I've seen thim all; and if there's a lady among them she's as much hair on her face as Serjint Quin, at the dippo in Athlone."

When Doctor Brady, scarcely noticing the remark, entered the room in the "Desmond Arms," he stood as much aghast as any of the people of the village.

Mohun, squatted on the floor with a large basin between his knees, was carefully washing me from head to foot; and having taken off his turban, the better to get at his work, his curly black hair had fallen down on his face and shoulders, nearly obscuring his features, but not hiding the large rings in his ears. His loose white dress had all the appearance of a woman's robe, and his diminutive stature confirmed the idea which took possession of my grandfather's mind for a moment, when he observed a still smaller individual seated on a chair before the looking-glass, with a huge head-dress, a pair of horn spectacles, and a cloud of drapery on its person.

"Good God!" thought he, as he told his friends when he narrated the story, "did my poor son marry a native woman after all? And is this the creature who is my daughter-in-law?"

In fact, Jacko, who was more sedate than most of his race and genus, had put on Mohun's turban, encased himself in my toggerly without much discrimination of the proper uses of each little garment, put on the glasses which Mrs. Dempsey had left lying on her book when she was disturbed by our advent, and was examining the general effect in the mirror; so that the horrid notion flashed on the Doctor that Mohun was my mother, and that the ape, whose physiognomy he could not well catch as it sat with its back turned on him in the chair, was a privileged attendant.

"Where is the lady?—where is my daughter-in-law?" he inquired as he glanced round the room.

Mohun, who was drying me, and putting on a fresh set of clothes, which he took from one of the portmanteaus that had come over in the postchaise, had by this time gathered up his locks, and got his head into his turban. He looked cautiously around him, and sidling towards my grandfather, held me out in both hands.

"Dis de leetl sahib—de only one I have, sir—me and Derry sahib and de black rascal dare—all that come, sahib, surela."

"Where is your mistress? Where is Mrs. Brady? What do you mean by all that confounded gibberish?"

Mohun deposited me gently on a chair. Then unwinding his sash very slowly, he opened its folds, took out a piece of oilskin, cut the strings around it, and showed my grandfather a letter.

"De sahib is Brady sahib's father?" he inquired. "Dis chitty for him."

"Of course I am—of course it is," cried the Doctor, as he seized the letter and broke the black seal. He had only read a few lines ere he muttered an exclamation of surprise, and crumpled the letter in his hands.

"My God!—is it possible? What a heartless wretch," he moaned, "what a fate!"

My grandfather buried his face in his hands, and then, after a pause, walked over to the easy chair in which I had been deposited, and taking me tenderly in his arms, whilst the tears rolled down his face, kissed me gently, and repeated to himself—

"Take charge of my dear child! Yes! indeed I will, my poor little waif, thus drifted to this barren shore. As long as I live my son's son shall be my only thought. It is incredible! It is quite beyond belief! And yet he must have loved her——"

Jacko had got hold of the letter, and was opening it with much precision and curiosity, fold after fold, when my grandfather suddenly made a rush at him, shouting out—

"Drop it, you thief!—drop it!"

Which Jacko certainly would not have done if Mohun, who with folded arms had stood motionless hitherto, scanning the Doctor's face narrowly, had not joined in the chase, and compelled the surrender of the document.

"You will take your young master over in the carriage. The luggage will go in the cart under the charge of one of the servants, and your hairy friend there. I will be over before you, and have a nurse to look after the child."

He took the letter into the back parlour of the inn. It was half an hour ere he emerged with an air which was very different from his usual genial, contented aspect.

"The Doctor's fretting agen about the captain, and seeing the grandson has brought him back to it," remarked Mrs. Dempsey. "Or maybe it's the suddin news coming on him of the poor crachure that's drowned. It's hardships he has to bear wid, the poor man. And to be left wid a child a year old, and that black hagger of a Turk, and the other thing on him, is enough

to drive him mad. The Lord pity and look down on him this day !”

And so the story of my orphanage was known ere the details of the escape of the *Ross-shire* from total wreck, and the account of the calamity, by which twenty-three persons were lost in the swoop of that deadly wave on her decks, got into the newspapers.

All I knew of my father was, that he was a tall man, with dark eyes, which followed me from the wall as I went round the room—light hair, cut short ; small whiskers, coming to an abrupt ending on a line with the point of his nose ; that he wore a scarlet coat with large silver epaulettes, tight lemon-coloured pantaloons with embroidered frogs, and highly shining boots. There he stood, leaning one hand on the hilt of a most formidable curved sabre. In the other he held a pair of gloves and a plumed shako, his back turned on a very fierce engagement on the side of a very blue mountain besmirched with the smoke of a burning city, in which elephants, camels, black men in white dresses, and white men in red dresses, were fighting, whilst a highly philosophical native held a champing charger, in case the fortunes of the combat were decided against Captain Brady's detachment, which, however, succeeded in routing the famous Pindarry, Poll Sing, and storming his stronghold.

There were, too, some memorials of him beside those of the Calcutta artist—tiger-skins with bullet-marks into which I pushed my fingers, stuffed birds, Indian curiosities, and models of forts, and, most treasured of all, framed and glazed over the fire-place, the despatches in which his name was honourably recorded, and the “order of the day” in which he was promoted for good service and bravery in the field.

My grandfather rather diminished my great interest in this portrait by saying as I was gazing upon it one day—“You must not think, Terry, that is very like your father. He had not that stern look—at least as I used to see him ;—he was not so cross. And he had beautiful hands and feet ; his eyes were brighter and softer. But still there's some look of him ; you could just know him by the picture, that's all.”

“And is that very like poor mamma, grandpapa ?” inquired I, with an assurance that he would say “yes.” My faith in the picture of my father had gone at once.

“Well, my dear child, I can't tell you. You know I never saw her ; your father married in India. But Major Turnbull at the Castle, who came over to talk to me of my poor son, whose great friend he was, said it was a very good likeness indeed, but that no artist in India—he doubted, indeed, if any in the world—

could do full justice to the wonderful beauty which made all his comrades envy poor Jack, and think him the luckiest fellow in the world at first——”

“Why at first, grandpapa? Didn't they always think him so?”

My grandfather stammered a little as he said, looking me full in the face, “Your mother did not enjoy—very good health. It is expensive to be sick in India; that's all.”

As I looked—I often did—on the lovely face which the painter—a better hand probably than the artist who had essayed to depict my father—had succeeded in endowing with an expression of the most charming sweetness and simplicity, I was happy to think that there at least I might rely on having a faithful resemblance of one of those I could never see on this earth.

My mother was half-reclining on a couch, with one hand hidden in a wild labyrinth of golden-coloured hair, whilst another caressed a spotted creature which my nurse told me was a young tiger, but which I knew afterwards to be an ocelot, one of the most graceful and sleek of the beautiful cruel cat tribe. The dark hues of the creature's skin, as, with half-closed eyes, it made believe to bite her tiny fingers, set off the snowy whiteness of her arm. The white robe in which she was enveloped was confined by a gold girdle at the waist, and fell in easy folds over a form of exquisite symmetry, leaving a glimpse of one fairy foot in a gorgeous slipper, peeping beneath; the other a marvel of smallness, hung slipperless over the edge of the sofa, as if the tiny covering had been kicked off in a pet, or carelessly let drop on the carpet. The eyes, full of dreamy abstraction, seemed looking into space—a blue which had a tinge of violet, shaded by a long fringe of lashes darker than her hair, and matching the lines of her brown eyebrows; an upper lip curved, slightly parted, and displaying the white teeth, was set over its firmer, straighter fellow, as though she were sighing gently, or uttering some word of endearment to her spotted plaything; while from the tanglement of her hair one taper finger had stolen and rested at the angle of her mouth.

The whole character of the attitude was one of indolent repose. By her side, on the ground, lay an opened book, which had fallen on some flowers, the leaves of which littered the rich carpet; and the rays of the setting sun creeping in through an opening in a lattice, lighted up the countenance and figure of one who seemed to me beautiful and bright as an angel reclining in some fairy bower, where the richest stuffs and gold and silver sheen formed a background of indescribable magnificence. I had gazed, when I was young, on those eyes till I fancied they kindled with a re-

sponsive glance; had babbled away to "dear mamma" till I thought some fond word came from her half-opened lips. Often had I mounted on a chair, and with a thousand little wiles sought to attract the notice of those great blue orbs, or embraced the cold flat canvas; but I bore to the young tiger a hate that once led me to begin an attack on him with a stick, which was only prevented at the outset by the vigilant Honour.

In fact there was an altar in that frame on which I made my sacrifices of love and affection to a mother's memory. If I dreamt of angels they appeared to me like my mother, and in my infant prayers I was wont to sigh that I might soon be taken to her and lie in her bosom.

Whenever any childish grief came upon me, I stole into the gloomy old room, which was seldom used then, for the days of grand dinner-parties were over, and made her image my confidant—addressed to her my tearful sorrows, and pressed my lips to the placid brow till it warmed to their touch. The portrait was my ideal of all that was perfection and goodness—of all that was pure and beautiful; and often in the dark I lay awake, gazing into the black void, till the fiery specks which danced about before my eyes faded away, and there the gracious form in its robe of white floated in the air—the eyes and mouth smiled on me; and the faithful Honour, anxious to know why my breath came so fast, shook me from my nightmare, and declared that "the picture was bewitchin' Mather Terry, and that if I didn't lave off, out of the house it must go."

The sad story I had gathered up so eagerly out of many a fragmentary hint, ere I had by incessant questioning obtained all the particulars from the old nurse, was short and pitiful. After my father's death, which took place very suddenly, my mother, who had no rich relatives, set sail for Europe in the *Ross-shire* East Indiaman. The vessel struck on a dangerous reef off the coast of Ceylon. It was in the night time; the ship was crowded with passengers; they rushed up when the crash roused them in their berths; and as they gathered on the quarter-deck a tremendous sea, sweeping from stem to stern, bore many of them into the boiling surf. Among them were my poor mother and her maid.

"Oh! why," I cried, "why was I not taken too? It was cruel to leave me! I, so little worth! And to carry her off to that dreadful death, where her cries were drowned in the howling of the wind, and choked by the wicked waters, as her fair limbs were dashed against the harsh sharp rocks." She and her companions in that sudden misery were never seen again. The stout ship was

driven by another sea with her bow on a ridge of coral, and lay for many hours dismasted and helpless ; but the gale, which was failing when the vessel struck, abated ; the sea fell, a sail was fastened under the leak, and the *Ross-shire* was carried in a sinking state into Galle harbour. Transferred into another ship, Mohun and Jacko and I were, after many adventures, in which the two former played distinguished parts, safely deposited, as we have seen, in the "Desmond Arms."

As I grew up I became aware that there was a tenderness and compassion in the tone of all around me, from my dear grandfather down to the turf-boy and peasant girls, who overcame their horror and fear of Mohun and his ape sufficiently to approach my little open car when I was driven out in state by Pat with my two dark attendants ; which for a long time I thought was natural. I was spoilt by constant petting and sympathy, which I could not understand. My only great trouble was caused by Mohun, who led a very uncomfortable life in his new home, and who found new discomforts every year. He was a Christian, he said, and as good a Roman Catholic as any in the parish. But Father Drennan, the parish priest, declared he was next to a heretic. Father Driver, the coadjutor, protested he was worse than a heathen. Mohun's religious notions were founded, in fact, on the compromise between Hindooism and Christianity, which is taken sometimes by missionaries to represent native conversion. He obstinately refused to go to confession ; and after a few Sundays he cut off a great treat to the whole population by ceasing to attend mass, because he said the "white budmashes" stared at him, and pulled off his turban ; and the validity of his excuses was admitted the more readily by the Doctor in consequence of the devilish pranks which Jacko played in the house during his absence.

"He would not ate his mails like a Christian," said the servants. Mohun sat apart with his head uncovered, crouched on the floor over his heap of rice, cooked with his own hands, closely watched by his bunder, to whom he gave handfuls now and then. He wore beads, but he did not count them in a proper manner. Biddy Hennessy, the dairymaid, had been obliged on one occasion to give him what she called "a regular lambasthin," in consequence of his "offering" to kiss her, and in that respect, and in a partiality for whisky, lay the only traits, all the people declared, in which he resembled a Christian at all. At intervals letters came for him, and then he would sit for hours writing strange characters on thin paper, and he posted with his own hands the heavy envelopes, on which the only word the postmistress could make out was "Bombay," with postage of fabulous amount. He spent little money

except on rolls of white and coloured calico, which he made into clothing with his own hands ; and when he received his wages, he changed his small roll of notes at the village store for silver. Where he stowed it none could guess, but he lent out money now and then on heavy usury to the people round the place ; and the popular dislike to him was aggravated by the sharpness of his bargains, and the exactness of his accounts.

One day the postman brought a letter for Mohun, and my grandfather was trying to decipher the direction, on which some words in English had fixed his attention, when the Madrassee, with his usual noiseless step, approached, and stood for a moment with bowed head and arms on his breast, till the Doctor handed it to him with the remark—

“This letter has just come with mine. I was thinking I had seen that handwriting before. Can I be right? Do you get letters from her, Mohun?”

Mohun took the letter, and thrust it into his breast.

“Dat chitty come from my wife, sahib,” he replied. “No oder mem sahib write Mohun chittys.”

“I don’t believe you, Mohun,” replied my grandfather. “I long have had my suspicions. Let me take that letter to Major Turnbull at the Castle, and see if you speak the truth.”

Mohun’s voice trembled a little as he said—“Mohun beg Doctor sahib not to ask him. Him wife not like her chitty to be read by Major Trumble, or any one but Mohun.”

“Then,” retorted my grandfather, angrily—“I tell you, the sooner you go back to your real mistress the better. I will have no one here whom I don’t trust. No spies ; do you hear? Master Terence can do very well without you, so you had better prepare to go back to your own country. The sooner the better.”

Mohun bowed meekly—“I go when Doctor please. Jacko not very well in him health. Mohun was thinking some time since he would ask Doctor to have him both go back. He will be very sorry to leave him Master Derry, but he soon forget poor Mohun.”

And so I did. The attachments of youth do not bear great strain. There was a sort of barrier between Mohun and myself, which thickened as time wore on. He avoided direct answers to my endless questions about my mother ; he knew nothing more than all the world knew ; he had not lived long with the Captain before his death and the voyage to Europe. Nevertheless I persecuted Mohun, asking him for ever about the event, and always hearing the same story of the storm, the striking ship, the rush to the deck, the sweep of the great wave, the awful cry of agony as through the black night struggling figures in white were borne

away into the raging surf. "Master Derry—poor mamma! de ayah, Bengalee woman—O, many ayahs, many sahibs, and de mate and sahiblogue and littel child all gone away!" and at last Mohun got cross. I had never seen the sea; I looked through all the books I could find for pictures of ships, and presented Mohun with engravings of Raphael's cartoon of "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes"—of a Roman galley—of "Our Saviour walking on the Water"—of Noah's ark: all in vain. "Not like dat big ship—not same as dat, Master Derry."

One day Major Turnbull happened to ride over from the Castle to see my grandfather on business, and as he dismounted I ran out to see his famous Arab charger. Whilst the Major stood for a moment in the hall, Mohun came in search of me, and the Major spoke to him in a strange language. I, who was accustomed to every expression of that mysterious dark face, saw that Mohun was agitated. He trembled, indeed, as he replied; and when I saw the Major raising his riding-whip in a menacing way, I ran to him, and said imploringly—"Oh, dear Major Turnbull, don't be angry with poor Mohun; I love him very much, and so does grandpapa."

The Doctor just at that moment came out to welcome his friend, and as they walked away together to the study, I heard the Major say, "Why, Brady, you told me the black fellow who came over with the little boy was a Madrassee."

"And so he is, I believe; at least he says so, if I understood him right."

"Not a bit of it; no more a Madrassee than I am. Some up-country fellow, and inclined to be deuced cheeky. A scamp from Delhi or Agra, I should think. And what the deuce——"

I heard no more, as the door shut; but when I said to Mohun, "The Major says you're not a Madrassee, but a scamp from the up-country, Delhi or Agra," Mohun looked troubled, and mumbled out, "Master Derry, dear! Major sahib tink all we tell lies. He know better dan me where I come from. Ho! ho!"

Somehow or other this little thing made an impression on me, and I felt that Mohun had not spoken the truth. The stories told by the servants created almost as great a fear of the Hindoostanee as that which had long ago been inspired in me by Jacko. That remarkable creature had been indisposed for some time, and had literally taken to his bed. Mohun placed his room at his disposal, and Jacko, who was of a chilly nature, lay for hours under the blankets, with his face just visible, and one long hairy arm out on the floor, languidly raising the dainties Mohun left within his reach to his pursed-up lips. The servants declared

that in the dead of night Mohun and the ape held long conversations together in a "kind of Frinch," and a daring pantry-boy protested that he had seen the Indian and Jacko seated at table one night, drinking hot whiskey-punch and smoking tobacco, "just like two Christians." And so this poor fellow, who had nursed and tended me—on whose neck I had hung for years—whose dark cheeks I had so often kissed—and who had lulled me to sleep with songs, the strains of which still float through my memory—who had rejoiced in my joy, and soothed my infant sorrows—left Lough-na-Carra for ever, as little regretted as if he were a passing stranger.

When Mohun went—it was a memorable day—I felt rather glad than sorry, and my conscience reproached me for my indifference. The little man had collected all his property—two large bags, and his cooking pots and pans, as bright as silver—in the back hall; Jacko, carefully dressed in a scarlet frock, with a large piece of flannel wrapped round his chest, sat between them munching an apple, and coughing "just like a Christian," whilst his eyes followed all his master's motions. The chaise was drawn up outside to take the party to the mail-coach, and the servants stood in a group to see them off. Mohun came down from my grandfather, who was confined to his room by a cold, and the girdle fastened round his waist seemed heavier than ever. He bade all the servants "Good-bye" in his own fashion, and to the astonishment of each, he offered as a parting gift a small gold piece, which produced rather a favourable impression.

"Faith, Misther Mohun's not so bad, afther all," exclaimed the cook, Biddy Flynn.

"Maybe he'd take ye off to Ingy wid him av ye axed him. He's his own cook, and ye'd have light work of it, Biddy," chuckled Honour.

"Bedad, maybe it's tin black wives I'd find at home wid him. Ax him yourself, Miss Honner."

Mohun was very grave. "Master Derry, dear Master Derry, some day you know who Mohun keep him rupee for," said he; "Mohun got little, very little rupee, but he not keep dem for himself." The fellow drew me towards him, and as he put his arms round my neck and kissed me, a tear trickled over his cheek. "Honna, you take care of Master Derry. You not let him burn himself, Honna; nor fall into the river, Honna; nor get drown like him mudder. Master Derry dear, some day you ask your granfader tell you how Mohun's missis was drown. He will tell you some day." Again he kissed me, mumbled some words in a tongue I did not understand, and summoning Jacko, who blinked,

wheezed, and coughed at the exertion of getting into the post-chaise, drove off with his eyes fixed on me, amid a chorus of "Good-bye, Misther Mohun!—good-bye, Jacko!—God send yez safe to Injy!" and a parting injunction from the cook to the postboy to "Mind them two black gintlemen, and carry them safe to the coach."

This is a long episode ; but I fear there is no regularity, no order, in this rambling, stumbling history, which rarely goes off at score, but which halts and kicks, or even insists on backing in a most wilful, unbroken, and provoking manner. I am coming to a great epoch in this part of my life. Up to this time I was nearly as happy as boyhood can be. There were no wants I could not gratify—there was no craving for anything I could not obtain. I did not feel the need of playmates, for all in my little world were ready to join in any sport, and I was in the proud position of being the director of my own pastimes. Now and then indeed came moments of reverie, when I thought of her I had lost—the sunshine vanished, and darkness came upon me. But the sadness did not endure long—the cloud soon passed away. My grandfather's care stood in lieu of the father's solicitude and the mother's affection which I had never known. Orphan I was indeed, but I was proud to feel I was the son of a gallant soldier ; and if my tears flowed as I sat with clasped hands before my mother's image, there was in my sorrow more of pity than of pain. So might it have been till time had done its work. But it was not to be. Far better is it ever to let the young know all that concerns them, than torture them with mysteries and deceit at the very time when curiosity is most lively and the character most susceptible of permanent impressions.

CHAPTER III.

DOUBTS AND FEARS.

IT was one evening long after Mohun's departure from Lough-na-Carra.

"It is a very curious thing, my dear doctor, that you never could get an exact account of the loss of your daughter-in-law among those people on board the ship." The speaker was Sir Richard Desmond, and I heard the words just as, in all the glories of my finest clothes, I was introduced, or rather butted, into the

dining-room by Honour, with my hair "done up," and a face brought to the highest degree of polish. There was a little dinner-party after a hunt. Sir Richard and Major Turnbull from the Castle, the Rector of Lough-na-Carra—who never went to hunt, but often "came by" as the hounds were throwing off, so that the Rev. Frank Stack might be seen very much as if he were engaged in the chase, although he was really, he said, only giving his famous mare, Daisy, a canter over the turf in the direction of the run—a couple of officers from Athlone, Mr. Rackstraw, Sir Richard's agent, and two of the neighbouring squires, completed the company; they were all evidently listening with great interest to something which concerned me, for on my appearing at the door, my grandfather said, "Hush! here he is. Now, Terry, make your best bow, and come sit between me and Sir Richard."

"He's getting very like his father," quoth Major Turnbull; "but he'll hardly be better looking, for poor Jack was a deuced good-looking fellow. What are you going to be, Terry?"

"I should like to be a soldier, sir," replied I, through an interval of my glass of sherry and sweet biscuit.

"There it is, you see," said Sir Richard. "The scarlet fever will skip a generation, but it will come out in the Bradys."

"Yes," sighed my grandfather. "It has been a fatal disease among us. I hope to be able to cure it in this instance. The poor boy will have neither money nor interest, and without either or both soldiering is a bad trade."

"You may say that, sir," exclaimed one of the officers. "Here am I, after all my service, sticking fast among the subs, whilst one fellow after another purchases over me; and as I have no friends to help me, I am likely to remain as I am for years to come, unless there's an epidemic breaks out among the field officers and captains."

"But the army's not as bad as the church," chimed in the Rector. "Here am I for the last twenty years rector of this parish of Lough-na-Carra, and I don't see a chance of promotion."

"Yes, my dear sir," cried Sir Richard; "but then Lieutenant Dashwood joined a service in which he looked for promotion in this world, whilst you will no doubt receive spiritual preferment in another."

"And as it is, Stack," added Mr. Rackstraw, "eight hundred a year, a good house, and the glebe lands of Kilmoyle, put you on the level with lucky general officers at least. You don't often meet a fellow in the king's service who is a general in the space of twenty-eight years."

"All this has nothing to do with my young friend, Terry," said

the Major ; "you will set him wondering whether he can put any trust in what he hears at church, if you let him think money is the only object a man should look to in life."

"I am sure I don't teach him that lesson," remarked my grandfather ; "and if I did, he would soon perceive my practice was different from my precept. He has already accused me of not giving him a chance of being a good boy, because I have never given him a flogging, for he knows the Bible says 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.'"

"And of course you told him," said the Rector, "that it meant, if the boy who deserved the rod did not get it, he was likely to be spoiled ; and Terry does not deserve it."

I confess I had my own opinion on that subject, being aware of divers circumstances for which a little chastisement might have been duly administered ; but I kept it to myself. The conversation got on to subjects in which I had no interest, and which I did not understand, about church and state and the army, whilst I was burning to tell them all the reasons why I wanted to be a soldier ; I wished to have a scarlet coat and gold lace, and ride a splendid horse, like Colonel Brady, of the King of Spain's service, whose picture was in the hall, or wear a silver cuirass and helmet, like Field-Marshal Graf von Bradé, who was depicted over the mantelpiece, seated on a champing steed, truncheon in hand, directing the charge of his squadrons against a confused mass of horsemen in turbans. That money had anything to do with all this bravery I never imagined, and I could now only conjecture that the tailors charged a great deal for such fine dresses. When I retired to my little room, under charge of Honour, I sought for information ; but my good nurse could not tell me much. "My brither is in the army sojerin, and he's a corplar in the Buffs, and all I know is, though he ses he should be ped more nor a shillin a day, he hasn't got above twopence or a thruppenny bit to bless himself wid."

"Honny, why doesn't grandfather get what Sir Richard calls an exact account of the loss of poor mamma ? Grandfather's daughter-in-law was my mamma, wasn't she ?"

"Indeed an she was. Sorra one of me knows, Masther Terry alanna, why they don't know ! Shure, how could the docthor get an exact recount from the poor lady, and she at the bottom of the say ? People ses Sir Richard has got more money nor brains, though he's making the one fly before the other. And now say yer prayers—and I wish it was a pather an' ave, an' prayers that could be of use to you, darlint, yez larned to say—and go to bed."

But every time I looked at the portrait, the thought of Sir Richard's question and the embarrassed air of my grandfather came into my mind. There was something I could not make out in the story I had heard ; and it was evident others were also not quite satisfied.

Mohun's parting advice came to my mind. A day or two afterwards my grandfather was in the parlour, and I on a stool at his feet was learning my lessons for "Mister Nolan, the schoolmaster," who came regularly to teach me, "unless he could not cross the ford," when the Carra was flooded (oh, how I delighted in a rainy day!)—though it was hinted that Mister Nolan's floods were sometimes caused by a drought, which could only be slaked in whisky. The old man was watching me, and I was roused from my reverie by his voice.

"What are you thinking of, Terry? You look very dull to-day. I am afraid you are not attending very much to your grammar. If you don't feel well tell me, and we will have a holiday."

"I was just thinking of poor mamma. Mohun told me to ask you, and that you would tell me some day how she was lost."

"Have you not heard, Terry, over and over again, your mother was drowned?"

"I have, grandpapa."

"Then why do you ask me?"

"Because I want to know more, and Mohun said you could tell me."

"Terry, you have heard from Mohun all about the ship, and there is no more for you to know—at least not now, my child."

"Oh, then, there is something I shall know by-and-by, is there not, dear grandpapa? Why not tell me now? I love poor mamma so—some nights I lie awake thinking of her. I love her picture so, and I am sorry God let her be drowned. Oh, grandpapa, do tell me all now."

"My dear child," said my grandfather, with a look which I had seldom seen on his face. "My dear child, you must rest content with what you know already, and you must not ask me these questions again. When you are older you shall hear all I know ; and then—then," he added, with a sigh, "my darling Terry, it will not cure your sorrow for your unfortunate mother. Ask me no more. Be content to know she is lost to you and us all."

"Grandfather, I have been reading of divers in the sea. Do you think, if I learned to dive, some day, when you tell me all, I could go out and find poor mamma's body?"

"Alas, Terry, the ocean which separates her from you is too deep for any diver. Think no more of this. You pain your

grandfather. Be patient, and when you know the truth, you will see I was right not to tell it to you now."

"Was her death so very dreadful?"

"Can any death be more painful or dreadful than hers of which you have heard so often? I wish that you had not been fascinated by that picture—that you had not seen it yet. There are things, Terry, more terrible than death. Now promise me," he said, "you will not open your lips to me about this again till I give you leave. Good-bye; I am going out for a little drive, and hope to hear a good account of you from Mr. Nolan." And with a fond look and sigh he rose from his chair, patted my head, and kissing my forehead walked out of the room.

But the idea had now begun to haunt me. There was something more to learn; I could think of nothing else. When Mr. Nolan came I was lying on the ground before my mother's picture, sobbing as if my heart would break. The pedagogue could make nothing out of my lessons or out of me, and even the terrors of a bad report to the Doctor did not arouse me to a sense of my preterpluperfect of "lego—I read," nor brighten me in "Tare and Tret." Mr. Nolan was nibbling a pen when my grandfather returned.

"The Muses, Doctor," quoth he, "have deserted our little disciple. Mnemosyne hath fled for the day; and although the ferula be forbidden here, perchance diligence might be stimulated by censure and curtailment of the iligancies of living—sugar, and chrame, and the like of that."

My grandfather had walked over to me, and taking up my arm placed one hand to my wrist and looked at me closely. "Do you feel a headache, Terry?"

"I do, grandpapa, just here." There was a throbbing pain and fiery flashes through my eyes.

"Mr. Nolan, I think we will not ask you to come over to-morrow, or till I send Pat across the bog for you. Master Terry is not very well; I find we must make up a little medicine, and give him rest for a few days."

It was long ere I rose from my bed: a fever had declared itself. I remember lights before my eyes, and faces as in a vision—my grandfather's, Honour's, Mary Butler's; others I did not know. I remember crawling, clammy leeches on my brow, the taste of medicines coming through the disguises of the most favourite jams; I saw in my sick dreams for ever the heavenly figure floating in the air, with blue eyes fixed on mine, and fair hair sweeping over my shoulders, and arched mouth which returned my ardent loving kisses. Will you bear with me and with

all my idle memories for awhile? I have met in my life men who have said they never knew an hour's illness, and I pitied them, for if they spoke the truth, they could not have experienced the exquisite pleasure of convalescence, the placid joy of recovering health, the grateful tribute to Self paid by all around the sick bed, which becomes a throne from which the sufferer beholds a household kneeling and paying homage!

But as I lay, with a sort of languid contentment, looking at those who watched me, noting the tenderness of Honour and the ever-growing care of my grandfather, who kicked off his creaky boots in the passage below—stretching my limbs, and now and then baring my sleeve to look at the bony arm and wasted fingers, there was still one thought in my head, "I wonder if grandpapa will tell me when I get well; I must get well and please him, and then perhaps he will keep his promise."

The first morning that I was dressed to make an excursion to another room Honour was delighted.

"Ah, thin! Masther Terry, shure and your breeches is two inches too short for yez. Why, yev grown like Jack and the Bane Stalk. Wirra! wirra! it's new shoots of clothes ye'll have to be gettin' on all sides. It's a regular goint yer become all along of the faver. See here!" she cried to one of the maids; "see here, Katty, if Masther Terry's not a'most as tall as I am, and if he isn't becoming the picture of his mother!"

Katty confirmed Honour on both points. Then came the return of strength, which, like some subtle fluid, slowly filled the body, and the great joy of going downstairs arrived one day at last.

I sat in the sunshine in the porch, till, for very weariness and lack of rest, I begged to be left alone, and asked my grandfather to go out for his daily ride; and then I dosed away in the sunshine, and the face and form of my mother came back again. I left my chair, and with feeble steps tottered through the passage till I came to the door of the old "State Room," and turning the handle I entered, and with eager eyes turned to the accustomed panel. Good heavens! she was not there! The place was vacant; the picture was gone! Ere I could collect my senses, Honour, who had missed me, came into the room, and stood aghast at my face of despair.

"Ah, thin, Masther Terry! is it wantin' to get your death yez are, comin' into the could room out of the sun? Yez ought to be ashamed of yerself; you'll be the death of yer poor grandada, that's done nothin' but watch yez, if the sickness comes on yez again. But what are yez cryin' for, at all at all?"

"Oh, Honny! what have they done with mamma's picture?"

"The picther ! An' shure hasn't the Docthor sint it to Dublin to git a tich of varnish, and to have a new frame, as the Injy one was fallin' all to pieces, an' it will be back again afore ye can say Jack Robinson. I wish it nivir cum here, bad cess to it for a picther ! I think it's bewitched yez, Masther Terry, shurely."

As I got better, the morbid influence of my illness, or whatever it was, passed away, but still an ever present thought was of my mother. I asked so often about the portrait, that my grandfather confessed it would be a considerable time longer before an artist to whom he had sent it could repair the damage it had sustained by accident on the journey to Dublin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISILLUSION.

WHEN I got better, I was asked over to the Castle to spend a few days for change of air and scene. There were ponies to ride and chaises to drive ; there were gardens and orchards ; there was a great pond stocked with fish ; and, above all, there was Mary Butler (I had been forgiven long ago for my little fib, and we were the best of friends) to play with whenever her governess, Mdlle. Petitot—whom the country people called "Mamsell Potatoe"—would let her. Sir Richard I seldom saw during the day. There were grand dinners going on. Mary and I, as we were returning from our morning walk or ride, used to meet fine ladies and gentlemen going downstairs to their breakfast, or watched them, still finer, filing in to dinner ere we retired to rest for the night.

One day, as we were seated in the garden in an arbour, making bouquets out of a large basket of flowers, under the superintendence of "Mamsell Potatoe," we were startled by hearing the voices of people coming towards us along the walk. I could distinguish the tones of Sir Richard and Major Turnbull, mingled with those of ladies laughing and chatting gaily. I rose, shy and awkward, and prepared for flight ; but little Mary, turning towards Mam'selle, asked—"Shall Terry and I go, or shall we stay till uncle comes ?"

"Mais pourquoi non, ma chère fille ? tu est bien propre—fraîche comme une rose ; et le petit Terry, pourquoi va-t-il se cacher quand tout le monde aime le pauvre enfant ? Restez donc, tous les deux, chers enfans."

"And here," said Sir Richard, "is one of M'Cracken's pet arbours. He declares it is as good as anything of the kind can be."

The shadows darkened the entrance, and I heard a voice saying, "Yes, indeed, it is very pretty. And here is my pretty Mary, the most charming flower in the garden, and her little cavalier. Good day, mademoiselle! I envy you the charge you have, and the place of your retreat."

It was my Lady Hantonby who spoke, looking at us through her inseparable glasses, and I felt my cheeks tingle as she went on—"Isn't that Master O'Brady, or O'Grady, very like Gainsborough's 'Blue Boy'?"

I did not know who or what the "blue boy" was, but I did not like to have the attention of the people, who were all philandering about us, directed specially to myself, and turned away.

"There," she continued, with her dry laugh, "I declare we have got the 'Bashful Irishman' at last. It is only at such an early age the specimen is ever seen; it dies young."

"I suppose it's killed in the ungenial climate it is removed to on transplanting. Our society kills the interesting creature!" joined in one of the gentlemen.

"No, my dear Dolly! It does not kill; but, like an acid meeting a salt, forms out of it an insipid neutral."

And as they swept on again I caught the words from Sir Richard—"Did you see how you made your friend, Doctor Brady's little grandson, blush? He's a sensitive little fellow, and has been very ill lately, and so I have had him over to keep Mary company in her solitude here."

"Kind and unthoughtful as usual, Dick," croaked old Mrs. Gregory, his cousin; "you'll have him and Miss Molly getting up a youthful attachment, and I don't suppose you would approve of the match. I plighted my troth when I was seven years old—didn't I, Dick?"

"My dear Letty! your flirtations began so early—with me, for example—you think such a brilliant commencement is the rule instead of being the exception. I declare we must not talk such folly within the children's hearing. Let us get on, or we shall be late for our ride."

Mary, who had heard every word as well as myself, put her little hand in mine and exclaimed, laughingly—"Mam'selle, you see Terry and I are to be lovers, and I shall be very fond of him if he doesn't tell any more stories."

But Mam'selle was by no means satisfied with such a pronunciamiento; and she said with great severity—"Mees Maree, a

leedle ladie as you should not speak such dings ; Master Bradee blush for your indiscreetness of language." At which Mary laughed immensely.

"Why, my dear governess, I have the example of Cousin Letty, and Terry has got the example of Uncle Richard ! You heard what they said."

But Mam'selle only looked at her watch, and with a little scream exclaimed, "It is dime for Mistere Noland to arrive ! You run off to de study or you shall be late, mon cher petit Terry."

And as I departed I was aware, from the Petitot's manner, that she was about to address to Miss Mary Butler an oration or admonition on her indiscretions, which that young lady, tossing back the curls from her forehead, and folding her hands on her knees as she sat amid a heap of flowers and bouquets, prepared to receive with an expression of the utmost composure and resignation.

Every day my grandfather called at the Castle to see me, and now and then he rode out with Mary and myself on the ponies, which went full gallop to keep pace with the slowest trot of his hack. One rainy morning, on putting his head into the school-room, he said, "Dan will come over to pack up for you to-morrow, Terry. The picture has arrived, and it is time for you to return to Lough-na-Carra."

"What picture is it your grandfather spoke of, Terry ?" asked Mary Butler. "He spoke as if you were to go home because a picture had arrived there."

"It is mamma's picture. It was injured going to Dublin to be new framed, and I am very fond of it."

"But you never saw your poor mamma, Terry, I think, and how can you be fond of her picture ?"

"But I am, though. I like to look at her. Oh ! she is so beautiful ! Poor mamma was lost at sea, you know, when I was a baby, and papa died in the army in India just before."

"They were talking about it downstairs one evening, when I was called in with the dessert," said Mary, musingly ; "yes, I remember—Major Turnbull was praising your father, and saying what a fine fellow he was ; and he said your mamma was the loveliest creature in the world, but——" here she hesitated and looked down.

"But what—oh, Mary ! I entreat of you, tell me—what were you going to say ? Dear, dear Mary, tell me ! You know you cannot say you don't know, for it would not be true."

"Well, Terry, perhaps I have no right to repeat things not

intended for me to hear. It might hurt you, too ; and it is just as likely Major Turnbull was wrong."

"If you don't tell me, I declare I will ask Major Turnbull this very minute what he said of mamma," I exclaimed, passionately.

"I cannot help that, Terry. But you must say everything that happened when we were talking. I was wrong, perhaps, at first ; but I stopped as soon as I could, Terry, for your sake ; and I won't say a word more."

I knew my little friend too well. I threw down my book, and with bursting heart ran downstairs to the billiard-room, whence came the click of the balls, and the voices of the party at the Castle, detained indoors by the rain. For a moment I stopped at the door irresolute ; in another I stood in the room, astonished at my boldness, and said—"If you please, Major Turnbull, I should like to speak to you for a moment."

The Major was a tall, lean man, with a face almost the colour of an orange, at least, as much of it as could be seen between the close frizzled whiskers, which, beginning in two walls above his ears, where they seemed inclined to run into his shaggy eyebrows, grew together, passing two oases of wrinkled cheek, and a thin, high nose, and reinforced in their course by a heavy drooping moustache, grew into a massive beard, black as his short-cropped hair. His eye was keen, dark, and quick, and there was something in his manner which made one feel that it was only by an exercise of self-control, and a desire to be civil, that Major Turnbull was prevented from "ordering" one whenever he spoke. He had a cue in one hand when I entered, and was patting the other with the upper part, as he surveyed the table and meditated a stroke. "Hullo !" quoth the Major, turning round, and putting his cue butt on the ground, as with his left hand he removed a cigar from his lips and let out a prodigious cloud of smoke. "And what the deuce do you want with me, my little man ?"

"Please, Major, I want to speak to you alone, if you please."

"I say, Turnbull, this looks serious. Shall I finish your game for you ?" cried Mr. Casey. "It is a cartel Terry has brought you, depend on it ; I never saw so grave a youngster in my life."

"What is it, my boy ?" quoth the Major, kindly. "Speak out, and tell me what it is you want of me."

"Indeed, Major Turnbull, I want to speak to you quite alone—only you and I two together." I looked at him alone, and saw the quaint look in his eyes.

"What on earth can it be ? However, I never refuse an interview to a gentleman, and we will have it out," he said, with a

smile, "as soon as I have finished this game of billiards. Sit down there beside Lady Hautonby till it is over, Terry."

"No, Major," I replied, for I was so impatient and angry I could scarce keep in my tears of vexation; "I will wait for you outside in the hall, if you please." And as I withdrew I heard a laugh, and Lady Hautonby exclaimed—"What a rude, ungallant boy. I shall not forgive you, Major Turnbull, for exposing me to such a rebuff."

But I did not care. The click-clack of the balls, the pauses between, the drawling call of the gentleman who was marking—"Fawty-taw! Thawty-noine!"—grated on my ear, and seemed interminable; at length there was a thumping of cues on the floor, and a clapping of hands, and then Major Turnbull, who had won the game, came out in the best humour in the world, and said—"Well, my little man, and what do you want to see me for?"

"Do come into the greenhouse, or into the corridor, or anywhere that I can speak to you," entreated I. "Oh! you can't think how miserable I am."

"Whew!" whistled the Major. "By Jove, this is the oddest thing. Just fancy! Here am I going along led by the sleeve to be made a confidant of by this Tartar of a boy. Eh? miserable, Terry?—why then you must be in love—or maybe you owe money in Kilmoyle, to Mrs. McNulty, for gingerbread. One can be cured; the other, especially at your age, is beyond me." I did not mind his talk, but led him unresisting by the arm till we came to a glass-covered passage leading to the greenhouses. No one was there. I shut the door, and then stopping in front of the Major, who was now regarding me with an expression of wonder, and a certain air of alarm, I said—"Major Turnbull, did you ever see my mother?"

"Eh, what?—your mother?—Mary Billing? 'Billing and Cooing,' as we called her. Egad, I should think so—often and often; why do you ask, Terry?"

There was something in his tone which hurt me. "I know she is dead, and I can never see her, Major Turnbull. Oh! if you knew how I love her. I can only look at her picture. I can never find out all I want to know about her. No one will talk of her. But you have seen her, and you knew her—Miss Butler has heard you speaking of her. Oh, do, Major, tell me all about her, and I will pray for you on my knees night and morning."

The Major was moved. He flopped down on one of the seats, and said kindly—"Come here, Terry; sit beside me and tell me what you want to know. It's odd," he said, musingly, "it is very—very odd. Here, now, is her picture driving her poor little son

as mad as——well, no matter.” He went on after a pause——“Your mother, Terry, was, without exception, the loveliest creature I ever saw. She was at once pretty and beautiful. That picture, though it’s good enough, is no more equal to her than that,” said the Major, snapping his fingers for want of a better simile. “Lovely! by Jove, I should think so. Ask Towser, who literally went mad about her! Ask Jack Nicholson, who went to the dogs about her! Ask ——; but what the deuce am I talking to you about! I tell you, my dear Terry, every man Jack of us, when I was quartered, years ago, at Cawnpore, was perfectly raving about her beauty, and her grace, and her fascinations, and her accomplishments. No, I’m wrong there—hold hard—Belle Billing was not accomplished. In fact, how could she be! She never was in Europe, and they don’t do the finishing touches in India—in fact, can’t educate anything but natives, tigers, bad livers, and the pagoda-tree. Besides, old Billing was an awful scamp. That is——You see, Terry, being your grandfather, I should not say that, perhaps—but he *was* a terrible fellow for beer and play. No doubt about it. Ask any old Indian when you grow up what Beery Billing was. He was not in the Company’s service—not regularly. He had been brought up under old Skinner. He was rather a pet of Sadut Ali—he commanded the crack regiment of the King of Oude, and, by Jove, usedn’t he to give it to the talookdars. I remember hearing——”

“Oh, dear Major Turnbull,” interrupted I, “tell me about him after. Now let me hear you speak of poor dear mamma.”

“Poor dear mamma!” said the Major, repeating my words twice, and emitting another cloud of tobacco. “Do you know that sounds very funny? Fancy this great Irish lad talking to me here in the middle of Ireland of Molly Billing as ‘poor dear mamma!’ Egad, it is astonishing. Yes—let me think—Well, as I was saying, your mother’s father married some girl who came out on spec with a cargo of spins—a Miss Deighton, I remember it was, because poor Jem Deighton, who was some sort of relative of hers, had a quarrel with Billing about his treatment of her, and hit him through the shoulder, which made Billing behave worse to her than ever. She went off—That is—hem—there was a separation, you know. Your grandmother died soon after, and old Billing was left with one little daughter, who was brought up quite among the natives. That was your mother. She could talk Persian like an interpreter, and understood all the dialects, and played on their cursed instruments.—Ay, by Jove, she made music out of them, too, though it’s almost incredible. I’m not quite sure if she didn’t wear bangles when she was young, and I know she had a tiny hole

in her nostril, where they made her wear a ring till she took it out. Well, Colonel Billing got into trouble with the Oude people at last. He burned a fort with a talookdar in it, by way of making him pay up his taxes, and it was said he didn't keep his accounts on the square. He fled to Cawnpore with his daughter, then a little creature, the loveliest you ever saw, and lived at the various messes, pestering the Government, when he was sober, with petitions and memorials, and plotting with rascally malcontents in Lucknow, and going from bad to worse—in fact, he was a tremendous scamp. I'm sorry to say so of your grandfather, Terry. Driving home one night from mess, old Jack Billing insisted on putting his buggy over a cliff near the river, and saved some one the trouble of breaking his neck. The Belle was sorrier for him than he deserved. As I tell you, his daughter grew up more beautiful every day. All the ladies of the station were delighted to have her with them till she became the belle, and then she had a bad time of it with the young ones. They said she was flighty, extravagant, mischievous—all sorts of things. But no one could stand her smile and her playfulness when she desired to gain them. The Brigadier's wife was like a mother to her, and it was believed they would adopt her. Your father's regiment came to the station just after her father's death. In less than two months we were all envying poor Brady—one of the dearest, kindest, bravest, simplest souls ever God put breath into—for his good fortune in being about to marry the Belle of India. That is, the young fellows did. Some of the old 'uns, and all the women, shook their heads. 'I hope they may be happy,' said the Brigadier's wife to me—I was a sub then, and aide to the General—'but I fear it may not be so.' It was in the evening, as we were looking at the last of the litters moving off to the hills where the bride and bridegroom were going to spend their honeymoon. I was rather startled, for Mrs. Crosby was a kind, good woman, and hated scandal, and was as fond as a mother of Mary Billing. 'Can there be any doubt of it, my dear madam?' I exclaimed. 'I can answer for him with my life; and you know what she is.' 'Alas! I do not,' said Mrs. Crosby. 'I confess I never could understand her. She could win any one in a moment; but when she had won him or her, she flung away her triumph and cared for it no longer. I almost fancy, if a human creature could be so, she has no soul—like that water-maiden of De la Mothe Fouqué. She is so vain, so fond of pleasure, so intensely selfish. Poor thing, she is very young; and then think how she has been brought up. I almost fancy she loved Charles Fraser at one time. After the race ball I spoke to her about him. She reddened a little, and said—'Oh, yes; Charlie

is a dear daddy long-legs. But he's got no rupees, and so, my dear Mrs. Crosby, I have told him it is no go.' 'Well, but,' said I, 'Captain Brady is not over troubled with rupees either.' 'No; but then she had heard he had a rich old father, and a fine place at home, and that he had noble relations, great prospects, and was certain to get on in the army.' 'He has no noble relations in England,' I remarked. 'There is a Spanish grandee of the name who is related to them. He has a cousin a field-marshal of the empire and a count; and another who is head chamberlain to the King of Naples.' She laughed and said—"It's all the same to me. What do I care about England? I was never there. His burra sahibs in Spain and those other places will like me all the better." The fact is, dear Mr. Turnbull, she is, I am sorry to say, rather ignorant, and very selfish. I was pained to see her face yesterday when I took out my jewel-case to give her some presents. You saw the diamond and emerald set she wore? Well, it was in the case in which I have my court diamonds, which belonged to my aunt, Lady Trafford, and when I gave them to her, her eyes were fixed with a look which made me feel almost cold on the large diamonds, and she seemed quite disappointed when I closed the box.' I'm telling you"—the Major had gone on smoking and talking, and now stopped—"Terry, what Mrs. Crosby said. Don't cry, my lad; I did not say I believed it."

"Yes," I sobbed, "you are all abusing her—all down on my poor dead mother."

"Terry," said the Major, gravely, "if you go on in this way I will tell you no more; and, begad, I think I have told you a good deal too much."

I pressed his hand, and my eyes entreated him to forgive me.

"Well, but what use will it be?" remonstrated the Major. "You ask me to tell you all I know, and you get fretted if I do. I was only telling you what a very good kind friend of your mother's said of her before her marriage. In fact, I know little more, my lad," he continued, slowly, "than that your father and mother came back from the hills, where they had been very gay and hospitable, giving splendid parties, which he detested; and they lived very fast in the plains—a large establishment. I am obliged to talk to you as if you understood all these things, you see. I dare say your grandfather can tell you it cost a lot of money. Any way the thing could not go on without a great fortune to back it. But any one who could have seen the—ah, yes, Mrs. Brady—in all her glory, driving her little pony team to the band parade, with no end of mounted grooms and chuprassies, and running footmen in attendance, beheld the gay *levée* round her

carriage, and watched her receiving homage from every man jack within miles of the station, would have thought ruin a cheap price to be the husband of such a brilliant being as Mem Sahib Brady Mohtec. I can tell you, as I said, but little more. The Brigadier's time was up, and I went back to my regiment soon after their return."

The Major paused for a moment. He reflected and continued—"You know, Terry, your father had a bad wound before his marriage? Well, he got very weak and ill. He was ordered home on sick leave; but it sometimes happens that a fellow can't go when the doctors bid him. I heard of his death, poor dear fellow, when I was up bear-shooting in Kashmir, after you were born. And the next thing I heard was the loss of the *Ross-shire*—the wreck in which you were saved, and so many were lost, my poor boy!"

"Yes," I cried; "I was saved! Why was I not lost with my darling mother? I am quite miserable when I think of it. Grandfather is very kind, but I would sooner have been washed away with her than live on always thinking—thinking—dreaming, and wishing to see her—Oh! so sick I am wishing—and all in vain."

"This, boy, is quite absurd. Why, if your mother"—the Major broke out, dashing down his cigar—"could, by cutting off a curl of her hair, save—well—herself. You see she was that kind of woman who isn't easily understood; and, by the Lord, Terry!" he added, "I am not sure this moment what became of her. If she didn't want to be drowned, hang me if the Indian Ocean could do it."

"I cannot understand you. Are you not sure she was lost?"

"Oh, yes, of course. But—oh, yes! certainly lost," said the Major, lighting another cigar. "Lost beyond all manner of doubt. You see, Terry, there was awful confusion on board—a crowd of native women, ayahs, and all that sort. Your mamma's name was put in the list of those who perished. I wonder, by the bye, what they would have done at Lough-na-Carra had your mother arrived there with all her staff. Do you know, she left Calcutta with seventeen domestics, male and female! Some of the women certainly went over the side—no doubt of that. When I tell you, Terry, that all the questions you have put to me are due to my saying several of the passengers declared they saw your mother at Galle after the ship put in there, you may fancy how wrong I was to repeat such gossip, and get myself into this long confab with you."

"But if she was alive after the wave washed the others away,

and the ship arrived at that place, where did she die, or what became of mamma?"

"'Pon my honour, Terry, I don't know. When I said 'they,' I should properly have said 'she,' for it was only Mrs. Trimmer, who came with your mother from Lucknow, where she went after her husband's death, that said it."

"And what did she say, sir?"

"Mrs. Trimmer was a chatty old person—much given to scandal, Terry. She used to tell us all at Leamington she was quite sure she saw you mother in Galle, walking to the quay, and that she went off in a boat to a foreign ship which was bound for the French settlement below Madras—Pondicherry it's called."

"Why should she go there if she were safe?"

"That's more than I can say."

"And what became of the servants?"

"They? Oh! they stopped at Galle; all except that precious fellow your native nurse. Captain Fraser, who was on board coming home, and who was taking charge of your mamma, arranged all that, and could have told you more than I can. But he was taken ill at Galle, and when he recovered, instead of coming home he went back to India, and has never returned since. I declare," said the Major, looking at his watch, "it's near lunch time. Now, my dear lad, I've told you everything I think you would care to know; and were you not the son of my dear old friend, I assure you I should have thought you rather a bore. Good-bye; we'll meet often, I dare say."

He was opening the door, when a thought struck him, and closing it, he said softly,

"I am thinking it is very foolish of you to disturb your mind by this anxiety about your mother, who must be dead and gone so many years. It will be better for your peace to think of it no more. Always keep your father's memory in honour, for he was a trump. And remember, Terry, I can't do much, but if ever you want anything except advice or money—if I gave you the first it would be bad perhaps; and of the second I've little indeed—come to me for your father's sake, and I'll do my best. Good-bye, again."

I sat in a state of bewilderment which caused the Major's words to sound as if they came to me in a dream. I had read of miraculous escapes from shipwreck—how a plank or a spar had borne some half-lifeless creature into a calm creek, or a wave had cast him ashore; and how, after years of absence, the lost one had returned to friends and home. I had oftentimes pictured to myself a nook in some lone islet, where, surrounded by strange

plants and flowers and animals, tamed by her beauty and gentleness, my mother was living—perhaps with her faithful servant, perhaps held in mild captivity by amiable savages. India was to me a land of marvels and wonders—the haunt of genii and magicians. Why might not the lovely girl have been carried in safety by some subtle charm through the seas, and found a haven in one of the happy isles? “Telemachus,” the “Tales of the Genii,” “Robinson Crusoe,” “Perilous Adventures,” and the “Arabian Nights,” lent their aid to a hundred devices, conjectures, and theories. I vowed over and over again that the first use of my independence and manhood should be to make full exploration of all the reefs, and caves, and islands far and near, where the cruel sea had played its part. Many a happy hour had I spent in the imaginary search, crowned by the bliss of discovering what I sought for. Into these secrets of my soul I let no one pry; they were kept and nurtured for myself alone; I feared to expose my meditations and my plans to the rough criticism which might destroy the illusions. But now, somehow or other, the story I had just heard seemed to search them out—the ideal I had enshrined in my heart was rudely shaken in its place. “Billing and Cooing, as we called her”—“Belle Billing!”—these and other words he had used about “fellows being in love” with her—the account of her father—the tone in which he spoke, as if she were an extravagant, heartless creature, who had not made my father happy, and who flirted with every one, and was so selfish! “Could it be true? No! Do not believe them, Terry! Nature itself pleads in your breast against these thoughts. And instead of confirming the story of her fate, the Major’s gossiping reports render it all the more likely she is living.”

The grating of wheels on the drive outside interrupted my reflections. It was the old carriage from Lough-na-Carra, and I hastened away to my room to get ready for my return.

“And mamma’s picture has come home, grandpapa?” I asked, in great glee, as we were driving back. “I shall be so glad to see her again.”

“Yes; your favourite study is in its old place. I must tell you that I have decided on sending you to Dublin to school; and as you are so very fond of that picture, I have got an artist to take a copy of it, which you can have and hang up in your room when you go to Dr. Ball’s, next month.”

The blow of the announcement was softened, but the effect of the surprise, the new idea that I was to leave Lough-na-Carra, prevented my saying a word.

“Dr. Ball is an excellent man,” continued my grandfather; “he

will take every care of you, and you will not be alone. Maurice Prendergast is going there too, and you will leave together in a few weeks. It will only be till Midsummer, when you come home for the holidays."

Maurice Prendergast was the son of a country gentleman who had a small estate not very far from Lough-na-Carra. He was a good-looking boy, about my own age, but less strongly built; and Mr. Nolan, who had been entrusted with the charge of his education, declared he was "*impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis*—a temper rather of Achilles than of Hector—in fact, a perfect young divil at times, as the Prendergasts were apt to be." Still it was a comfort to have him as a companion; and my regrets at my departure were much diminished when on running into the old room I saw underneath the picture of my mother resting on the floor, a canvas of the same size, with a copy so fairly executed as to give little cause for objection. The eyes were more blue, the colour on the cheeks was brighter, the teeth were whiter, the hair fairer, but the expression was at first sight pretty nearly the same; and it was only on a close examination that I missed something in the copy which was in the original, and yet I could not say what. Under the new frames of the pictures were tablets, on which was inscribed, "Mary, wife of Captain Brady: ætat. 16. Obiit 27th May, ætat. 18."

CHAPTER V.

THE JOURNEY.

IT was on a bright frosty morning towards the end of January that the Sligo royal mail drove up to the "Desmond Arms," in the town of Kilmoyle, to change horses, and to take up the two juvenile passengers who had been sitting in the parlour and running out every now and then to take a look up the main street for the coach. Mr. Prendergast and the Doctor were discussing politics, the Reform Bill and the Repeal of the Union, over the fire. Maurice and I, proud of the permission to travel outside, had arranged our luggage in two piles at the door, and were discussing the probable character of Dr. Ball.

"He is an awful fellow for caning, I can tell you. He used to lick my father till he was black and blue: and Dan Casey was taken away because the Doctor battered him so," said Maurice. "But that was a long time ago, and he can't be so strong. If he tries to whale me," he added, setting his teeth, "I'll kick his shins and blacken his eyes."

"Whose?" exclaimed I, "Dan Casey's?"

"No," answered Maurice, fiercely, "Dr. Ball's, or any one else's who ventures to beat me."

"But if you deserve it?"

"No matter whether or no. I'll try not to deserve it, and if I can't help it that's not my fault, and I'm not to be licked for what I can't help. But I say, what have you got there?"

The helper had just brought in a large square case and put it up against the wall near my boxes.

"That's my mother's picture," I replied. "It's going to Dublin with me."

"But you're not going to take it to school with you?" said Maurice. "You'll have all the chaps laughing at you."

"I am, indeed; let them laugh, and welcome. Here comes our coach."

The four horses, with outstretched necks, dilated nostrils, and heaving sides, were already going off to the stables, wreathed in steam, and Mr. Tunks, the coachman, was surveying us over the rim of a glass of "spirits," his red face rising from a cloud of mufflers, and his drab coat of many capes just leaving a glimpse of the scarlet and gold lace which were the admiration of the road in fine weather; the only sign of his dignity as a royal servant now visible being a broad gold band on his battered wide-brimmed beaver; as my grandfather and Mr. Prendergast emerged from the inn in conference with M'Cluskey, the Guard—a short, square-set, active fellow, with a quick brown eye, high cheek bones, and broad face. "I'll never lose sight of them till I hand them over to the doctor's man at the post-office. The two outsides that were booked from Boyle, Mr. Tunks," he added to the coachman. Mr. Tunks gave a grunt. It was his usual style of conversation, and it was quite wonderful how much he could make the guttural sound express. There was a tradition that many years ago he was a colloquial, lively sort of person, but that having overturned his coach and killed a passenger by careless driving whilst conversing with the box-seat, he had made a vow against gratuitous speech, and had kept it.

"Now thin, Pat, look sharp there. Get up these things, you and Owney. And what's that?" he shouted, as the two men took up my wooden case, "what in the name of all that's good are you going to do with that?"

"It's Lough-na-Carra luggage, Mr. M'Cluskey, belonging to the young mather."

"And, shure, don't you see it can't go? It can't go into the box, anyway, and I can't have it stuck up there, as if it was a dining-table at Dublin Castle."

"Well, never mind, Terry," said my grandfather, "it shall go up by the coach. It will be only a day after ; this is the mail, and they don't take such heavy things. Now mount, my boy ; you have the two seats behind the coachman."

The doctor embraced me affectionately, old Mr. Prendergast shook hands with his son, Mr. Tunks clambered up to his perch, exhibiting two enormous top boots in the feat. The Guard had sprung lightly into his seat, and the helpers were just about letting go the horses' heads, whilst Mr. Tunks's whip-lash was describing a long curve in the air, when there was a cry of "Stop ! stop a minute !" and a groom in the blue and white livery of the Castle dashed alongside on a smoking horse, with a parcel under his arm, and a little note, "it's for you, Masther Terry. The young missus sent it to you, and Sir Richard's put something inside. Begorra, the mail was nigh startin' too soon for me." In another instant, to the "All right behind !" of the Guard, the leaders were let go, the Guard executed a flourishing and broken version of "Garryowen" on his Kent bugle, and amid "God bless you !" from the dear grandfather, and the "hurroo" of the crowd of idlers always present on such occasions, the Sligo mail went off at its fixed rate of nine Irish miles an hour.

The parcel lay at my feet. The letter, with a large seal, was one of the kind known to young ladies in the pre-envelope period, being a pentagon of many folds, and was directed in a large angular hand to "Master Brady, passenger to Dublin." I opened it, and inside was a piece of paper, rather dirty and discoloured, which proved on subsequent examination to be an Irish bank-note. I read :—

"January 27, Wen'sday Night.

"MY DEAR TERRY,—Uncle and mam'selle have let me write to you, and so I write to say how sorry I am you are going to leave us. Mam'selle says I should say this in French ; but I think you would like English better. Be sure not to forget us, and say your prayers always. I send you a cake we had made for you ; I hope you will like it. Uncle is sorry too you are going. He hopes you will accept the present he sends you, and that it may be useful. You are not to get into fights ; but Major Turnbull says if any boy tries to bully you you must not let him, and that may lead to fighting. The cake is a seedcake. Adieu.

"Believe me to remain very truly,

"MARY BUTLER.

"Mrs. Burgess, Mam'selle, and all of us send their regards.

"N.B.—We will see you at Midsummer."

I read the letter twice, folded it up, and put it into the pocket of my jacket, under my greatcoat. When I looked up, Maurice was regarding me from under his dark eyebrows with a curious expression, but he said nothing. I was delighted with the buoyancy of the motion, the rush of the keen air, the wide view across the flat country, bounded by the blue hills over the course of the Shannon. I had left my *pays de connaissance*—all was new to me. From time to time Mr. M'Cluskey shouted out scraps of information over the pile of luggage.

"That's Mr. Joyce's, of Beaupark!—there, ever so far beyant, is Persse of Blackcastle! Look at the Round Tower there—built be the Danes it was, though the Doctor will have it that Christians had a hand in it. This is Ballyduff we're coming into—divil such a place for pigs in Ireland—and there's no keeping free of them."

A solo on the horn gave warning to the pigs and their proprietors of the coming danger, and we drove through Ballyduff without any serious casualty, although there was a considerable deal of grunting from Mr. Tunks, and of grunting and squealing from the pigs, as they were coerced by whip and stick to leave their pleasant places. We had left the town when Maurice, who had been sitting silent, said—

"Do you often go to the Castle?"

"Now and then. Do you? I never met you there."

"No; we don't visit there much. Papa and Sir Richard don't agree. They've had lawsuits, and they have disputes about politics. Do you know all the land the Desmonds own was once ours?"

"No! was it indeed, Maurice? How did it become theirs?"

"Yes. And all the Lough-na-Carra land, and as far as you can see from Kilmoyle to the hills near the sea. Papa has it all on a map."

"But you haven't told me how it was lost. I thought the Bradys always owned Lough-na-Carra, and ever so much beside."

"That may be; but I tell you what papa says, and though he is poor no one ever dared to say he told a lie. My ancestor came over with Strongbow, and he got ever so much of the west of Ireland—but it has all been stolen from us."

"But then, Maurice, you know your ancestor took it from some one else—some poor Irish chiefs—I believe we are Irish; and perhaps you took our land, you know."

"And why not? We fought for it and won it; that's what I say is the best way. But the laws and religion robbed us of our own, and the only way to get it back is to fight for it. Do you know," he exclaimed angrily, "that we were punished because we took the side of our lawful king and would not change our religion?"

and we were called 'rebels' and 'papists' by the traitors and the apostates who were lucky."

"Well, but, Maurice, suppose we were always to go on fighting, there would be no peace. If you could get Sir Richard's lands by force, he would try to get them from you by force again."

"Peace!—I want no peace. I want nothing I can't keep by my own strength. We all, my father says—Butlers, Geraldines, Desmonds, Bourkes, Prendergasts, Cogans, and Laurences, and the rest—won Ireland under Strongbow for ourselves and not for the king; and some of them have contrived to keep their own, and to take that of the others who would not sneak and toady those English. And the English set us fighting, and made laws to crush us, till they've made us all miserable like that fellow there!"

He pointed as he spoke to a peasant who was driving a pig along, and who drew up by the side to let the coach pass. On his head was something like a battered black saucepan without a handle; his coat was composed of an infinity of pieces, which no art could form into a continuous garment, and through the rents were visible a ragged waistcoat, and through the chinks in the vest could be seen a tattered shirt; his nether man, terminating in a pair of bare feet, blue and red, was imperfectly covered by corduroy pantaloons, patched and torn, making an abortive attempt to effect a junction with his footless stockings of worsted. He seemed in the best of good humour, tossed up his stick and caught it with one hand, whilst he took a sharp haul on his pig's tether with the other, and grinned with delight as he received the Guard's salutation.

"Who is that poor man, Mr. M'Clusky?" I asked, over the luggage.

"Poor! He? Tim Doolan? Faix, he's not poor at all, at all! I'll be bound Tim has a hundred and fifty goulden guineas in a pot somewhere this minnit. He's a warm man for these parts, pays Major Goff twenty-five pounds a year rent, and has as fine land as any in the county. Och! I wish we were all poor like him, I do. And he drivin' home that pig, that's worth maybe fifty shillings at laste, as it stands."

"I dare say, Maurice," I continued, "that man may hate you and me because he thinks we have his land. I don't understand these questions, but I never come to the dining-room but they're all talking of them, and I detest all about it."

"Do you know Miss Butler, at the Castle, Terry?"

"Yes, of course I do; that little letter that came and the parcel were from her, and Sir Richard sent me a pound note."

"I think she is very pretty. They say if Sir Richard's brother

who is out in India dies, she will own all the estates, and that if some other old Butler on her father's side dies also, she will be a great heiress in her own right."

I do not know how it was, but I did not like talking to Maurice Prendergast of Mary Butler; and as the novelty of the scene wore off, there was a good deal of monotony in the cold drive of twelve hours to the city, which to my imagination was the finest in the world. At each stage M'Cluskey displayed his activity by leaping from his seat over the rail clean to the ground, and at each stage he duly came to the coach-door with a glass of whisky and water for an inside passenger.

"The colonel's colic is very bad to-day, Mr. Tunks," he said, with a wink; "that's the seventh dandy he's had since startin', poor man!"

Later in the day we were aware that the inside passenger was singing in a very cracked voice, and when we halted for dinner I saw a tall, thin old man, with a very red face, closely shaved, balancing himself with great dignity as he got down. He had a very fierce grey eye, rolling in a kind of watery medium, as though it were preserved in spirits.

"Why don't you hold up your horses, sirrah?" he burst out, angrily; "you're not fit to drive. I'm hanged if I don't get you dishmiss, to go breaking gentlemen's necks that way!"

Mr. Tunks merely grunted; and the colonel, eyeing him with much severity as he toddled towards the inn door, shook his fist, and, uttering again the words, "I'll get you dishmiss, shure's my name Finucane!" drew himself bolt upright, and walked as if on a plank in the same direction.

"Ye'd better take no notice of him, me boys!" said the Guard; "the cross dhrop is on him. Och! an' faith, it's well there's no other inside to-day, or there 'ud be wigs on the green! He's shot more than one man—the ould scamp!—before the law put the fear of God into these pistol gentlemin. Ye'll have twenty minits for dinner, and make the most of yer time, and take the value of yer money, I'd advise ye."

There was a fire at the end of the dining-room, before which the colonel had taken his position with his hands under the tail of his bottle-green coat with brass buttons; his head erect, set in a high bandana, his eye menacing.

"Shut that door, you boys,—d'ye hear!—shut that door! Boys oughtn't to be let travel at all. What's yer names?—who are ye? Brady! Any relation of Mick Brady of Punchestown? Prendergast, eh? Are you a son of Prendergast that was in the Royals? No. So much the better. He was a scut. I'd tell

him so if he was here this minute. I would, by ——!" and he thumped the table till the glasses rang, by which he appeared much mollified. He ate like an ogre and drank like a fish; Maurice and I could scarce take our eyes off him. At last he roared—"What are you boys staring at? If I catch you again, by japers I'll teach you manners, as sure as my name's Finucane."

We were glad to get up on the top of the coach in the dark, as M'Cluskey, after a note on his bugle outside, came in to announce "Time's up, Colonel; come along, young gentlemine."

"Isn't he a dreadful old wretch? And he has shot men, the Guard says."

"I wish I were bigger, Terry, and I'd have thrown something at him for his abuse. Wouldn't he have been astonished if I hit him with a plate on the nose?"

The enjoyment of this picture was diminished by the appearance of the Colonel himself at the door, with the landlord holding a light for him, and a helper with a lantern in attendance.

"Steady there!—why don't you hold that light steady, and be hanged to you! It's before your time, sirrah! Before your time—look at my wash,—Shure's my name's Finucane, I'll dishmiss you!"—and with sundry lurches and catchings of himself up, the terrible dinner-guest made his way to the coach-door, and with an adroit shove from M'Cluskey was deposited inside. After a silent drive, and wrapping ourselves up in our coats, we slept in our seats, fastened with a strap by M'Cluskey. There was a gleam of lights in my eyes, and a hand shook me—

"Here we are in Dublin. Dr. Ball's man is waiting for you."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCHOOL.

WE forget the tears and terrors through which we have passed, or, remembering, smile at our sufferings, exquisite as they were at the time, when we speak of our schoolboy life. It was with a feeling of something like dismay that I contemplated the expanse of dark brick, lighted by a solitary lamp over the hall window, which was announced by the Doctor's man as the school-house; nor was it diminished when the drawing of bolts and the grating of locks ceased, and a door, partially opened, permitted a fierce face to be seen by the gleam of a candle held high in air, and a gruff voice inquired—"What kept ye so late, sir?"

"It's the mail was late, Mr. Cuffe—that's what it was. An' there's a lot of luggidge, too, for such gossoons."

I had had visions of a hot supper—of blazing fires—of well-lighted rooms on my arrival ; and now I stood with my companion, shivering and hungry, by the yawning expanse of an empty grate, in a gaunt hall, provided with four ancient leather-backed chairs, in which ticked a wheezy but loud-toned clock. The man had deposited our impedimenta, and Mr. Cuffe, who had been surveying it in intervals of his close examination of ourselves, having shut and bolted the door, said—“ Now, Brady, now, Prendergast ! which is which ? Very well ; each of you take up his own things, whatever you want for the night, and I’ll show you the way to bed. Don’t make a noise, though ; do you hear ? ”

And without waiting a moment Mr. Cuffe’s heels, projecting over the ledge of his slippers, began to move rapidly towards a staircase in the distance, and the receding light of his candle told us there was no time to be lost if we did not desire to be left in darkness. Maurice and I seized on a box apiece, and were pattering over the oilcloth, when Mr. Cuffe, turning on the staircase, hissed out—“ Hish, there ! What d’ye mean by all that noise ? Pull off your brogues, you fellows, or you’ll have the whole house awake. You must come up the front way.”

Maurice and I did as we were told—we were tired, cold, sleepy, and obedient. Again Mr. Cuffe continued his career—one stair—a vault-like landing—a corridor with polished doors, from which the candle-light was reflected on grim portraits against the wall, terminating in black night—a carpeted floor.

“ Make no noise here,” whispered Mr. Cuffe. “ This is the Doctor’s shoot.”

There was next a carpeted staircase ; then another corridor. Mr. Cuffe turned to the left, and at the end halted at a door covered with green baize, which he unlocked, motioning us to pass through, and then locked at the other side. We were in a low whitewashed hall with doors on both sides, and outside each door was a little mound of shoes and boots of all sorts. A sound like the echoes of some distant surf saluted our ears ; and Maurice, answering my look of wonder with a nod, said, as we walked along—“ Do you hear them snoring ? What a lot of them there must be ! ”

As Mr. Cuffe proceeded down the passage, he halted now and then and listened at the doors, and I was aware as we proceeded of creakings behind us as if one were gently opened.

“ This,” said Mr. Cuffe, “ is your room—No. 7. You have the best in the lot. Boyd is away—Putland is in the sick dormitory ; and there’s only Grierson and——”

Just at this moment some heavy body flying through the air, and skimming over my head, came from behind. In an instant we were in darkness, as Mr. Cuffe, with one hand on the door-handle, was lighting us into our bedroom.

"I'll pay you off for that! I know you, my boy," gasped the tutor, who had been knocked against the door by a hard bolster. "You boys, go in, and wait till I come with the light. Just look out, O'Brien, for that."

As Mr. Cuffe groped his way along the passage, we heard the door at the end open and shut. In a moment there was a pattering of many feet, and a rustling as of a storm in the air. The noise enveloped us. I was caught by the hair just as I heard Maurice shout out,—“I say, none of that! If you hurt me again I'll knock you down.”

It was a rash threat, and I suffered for it as well as he. The urchins who were around us knew no mercy, and did know the room; and joined by the two boys who were in it, furious at being roused from their sleep, Maurice and I, striking out blindly, were pinched, cuffed, bolstered, and throttled by unseen arms, till a whistle sounded at the end of the passage, when the pattering, rustling, and thumping sound was renewed, and died out in a creaking of doors, and in a minute more a light and Mr. Cuffe, with a candle in a lantern in one hand, and a cane in the other, appeared.

“Och! och! and so they've been bolstering you, have they! You must put a penny to your eye, Brady. Now, you Grierson—you Cole! don't be shamming there. You'll have to report who did it in the morning to the doctor.”

Grierson and Cole were very fast asleep indeed—Cole's snoring was of the most solid and portentous character, indicative of apoplexy; Grierson, who lay in the next crib, had a sweet unconscious expression on his face, which was, however, scarce in character with his puckered-up mouth and shut eye.

“That's your bed, Brady; that's yours, Prendergast. You may lock yourself in to-night. There's your candle. The first bell will ring at half-past six; prayers at seven.”

Mr. Cuffe shut the door and retired; and Maurice and I were left to our meditations.

“You'll have a black eye, Terry,” said he, “from those black-guards.”

“And your mouth is cut, Maurice,” returned I. “Let us get to bed. I feel so tired.”

As I turned to my box I was aware that Grierson was sitting up in bed, and that Cole had both eyes wide open.

"I say, did I hear you call me a blackguard?" asked Grierson.

"Yes," returned Maurice fiercely; "you or anyone who attacked two strange fellows in the dark like that for nothing."

"Will you be licked to-morrow, or will you have it now?" asked Master Grierson, with much earnestness, getting out of bed as he spoke, and advancing towards Maurice.

I saw that he was a stout, tall, fair-haired chap, with a flat, flabby face, at least an inch taller than Pendergast, and I ran in between them saying,—“No; you shall not hit him. You are a cur, and if you want to fight, you must fight me.”

Master Grierson saw, perhaps, I was a little more of his match though still a year younger, and somewhat lighter than he was.

"You're a cocky cub enough, I daresay. Now then Cole, you hide that fellow, and I'll manage this," and, squaring his arms, he commenced his preparations for battle. Whilst we were parleying in elegant prelude, Maurice had gone to the door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and coming alongside me, said,—“Terry, I'll stand by you to the last, and we will give them a thrashing for the honour of Kilmoyle. Now come on.”

His face was dark with passion; the blood stealing over his lip gave him a savage look; and Cole, who did not quite understand why he should be called on to break his night's sleep, suggested a basis for negotiations of peace.

"If you have got anything in your boxes we will let you off," he said. "Shan't we, Daddy?"

"Let us see what the louts have first, and if it's worth taking, we shan't lick them."

And acting in that spirit, Grierson made a rush at the box which stood beside my bed, and which I had been uncording when he thought fit to rouse up. With a spring I stood before him, and shouted, "You musn't touch my things;" and as I said so, received a blow in the face which sent me staggering towards the middle of the room. It was but for a second. I knew nothing of boxing, but I was strong and active, and in the twinkling of an eye my knuckles tingled with the sharp, quick jar produced by a blow delivered on a bone, and blood ran from Grierson's lip.

I cannot tell what followed. I was aware that Cole and Maurice were engaged in a similar struggle; whilst Grierson and I pummelled and cuffed each other, and scuffled and wrestled all over the room.

Chairs were overturned—water-bottles and basins and basin-stands went crashing on the floor. Like most Irish boys, we were unacquainted with any scientific mode of giving black eyes

and bloody noses, but eyes were puffing and swelling, and noses and lips were bleeding on both sides.

My antagonist was more used to such encounters ; but I had learnt a little of a rude sort of wrestling. I had the advantage, besides, of being dressed, whilst he was in his shirt ; so, whenever we closed, I generally managed to throw him. Once his head came with force against the edge of my box, and I gasped out—"Do you give in?" And was answered by a feeble blow in the ribs. Still his strength was failing, and fall after fall brought him nearer to submission ; Maurice and Cole, better matched, perhaps, were whirling in the eddies of combat among the beds and overturned chairs.

"Let us in to see fair play." Gentle knocks and urgent entreaties proclaimed the anxiety of the boys, who had been aroused by the scuffle, to join in the fray. But we were little inclined to listen to such appeals ! With nostrils distended, fast-closing eyes, dishevelled hair, swollen hands and lips and cheeks, and torn clothes, the only sounds inside the room being our heavy breathing and the thumps of fists, and the knocking about of the scanty furniture, we fought on till a sharp cry escaped from my opponent ; and he exclaimed, "Oh, my foot ! my foot !" He had trodden on a piece of glass. I was terrified. Cole, hastening to his friend, who was sitting on the bed in agony, ran to the door and cried out—"Some of you ring the doctor's bell ; here's Dick Grierson cut his foot open."

I had seen at my grandfather's people brought in with accidents, and in imitation of what I had observed, I poured out water in a basin, tore a strip off one of the shirts in my box, and bathed the cut ; but the glass was inside, and I could not stanch the wound.

Maurice had unlocked the door, and was standing beside Cole, watching the fainting boy with terror and pity, when we were aware of a tall man gliding among us ; his white hair flowing over his shoulders from the silver band of a large black velvet cap ; his face, round and florid and smooth, animated by an expression full of repose and calmness. His figure was shrouded in a dark velvet dressing-gown ; and although he had not long been roused, Dr. Ball looked as if he were quite ready to sit for his portrait ; his theory, indeed, being, that no one should ever be in such a hurry as not to be able to appear in the utmost propriety of dress. He looked at the scene before him with some kind of curiosity, if not surprise, laid down his candlestick with deliberation, and sitting down on the bed beside Grierson, having previously placed a handkerchief across his own knees, took his leg upon his lap, and

examined the cut in silence. Then he put his hand into his breast, drew out a small case, and produced from it a spiteful-looking, shining implement of steel, with which he firmly seized the glass, and by a steady tug, which made the lad utter a bitter cry, pulled it out of the wound. At the doorway were shadowy faces; a faint murmur came from the passage as the doctor, selecting another implement from his case, passed it to and fro in the fissure. Then with lint from the same inexhaustible case, and with water and scissors, he made a bandage round the wound, placed the limb on the bed, took up his candle, and surveyed us slowly one after the other.

"Such are the fruits of disobedience—the results of strife and contention," he said at last. "If you were the beasts of the field, you could not tear and wound each other more cruelly; but the beasts have none to guide them—you have. They have none to correct them—you shall find that you have. Mr. Cuffe," he added, "stay in this cubicle to-night in one of the spare beds. The surgeon must see Grierson early in the morning." And the tall figure vanished.

I felt relieved when he went; and yet I wished he had said something to me. There was a cold displeasure in his eye as he looked into my face, more hard to bear than words. It was a keen reproach to be stared at with such haughty contempt; and as I looked at my face in the glass, and turned to Maurice, who had got into bed, and had sullenly given his hand to me, I became aware that our first interview with Dr. Ball was not of a nature to impress him in our favour. My eyes were puffed and painful, and my cheeks shining and swelled out with blows; my lips like a negro's. Maurice was not much better; Cole and Grierson bore similar marks of the fray; and Mr. Cuffe, as he walked round us with his candle, had some reason for saying, "Our mothers would not know us;" though he little understood the significance of his remark in regard to myself.

Dr. Ball began his college career as a Fellow Commoner and an idler; of a fine person and manner, he associated with the wildest set of his year in days when there were really wild young men in Trinity, and ere it had ceased to be a staid training-school sort of place; and he drank, hunted, and played with the blue bloods of the Irish university, before Oxford and Cambridge came into fashion for Irish students, and such appearances in the world as Swift, Goldsmith, Sterne, and Burke became impossible. It was supposed old Mick Ball, the linen-merchant, would leave his only son all his money. His son acted on the supposition. One day old Mick called in on him in Botany Bay Square, and found the

young gentleman sitting at a well-appointed table. It was twelve o'clock, and old Mr. Mick Ball glowered at the silver on the cloth and the decanter of claret, and the tea things, with a puzzled, discontented look.

"Is it breakfast or dinner yer atin, Dinny?"

"Well, sir, you see it's a sort of composition between the two—a snack you would call it in the old time—lunch, let us say. How very well you are looking, to be sure, this morning."

"Am I, Dinny? I don't feel so. I've been over to yer chewther's" (Dinny's face slightly moved), "and what he tells me isn't like to make me feel pleasant."

"Indeed, sir! Some wars, or rumours of wars. Apprehensions concerning flax, or combinations in the political world affecting linen? I hope not."

"No, Dinny; its rhumers about yerself, an' its combinations affectin' my pocket, that thrubbels me. Now listin awhile. The divil an honour ye've tuk since ye inthered. You ought to be a scholar this year, yer chewther tells me. There's young Brophy, of Skinner's Alley, got one, an' is always gettin' honours, and he'll be a Fellow, an' maybe a bishop before he sthops. It's nearer pluckin' you get every time, and fine feathers they'd get off you. Here have I been slavin' an' toilin' an' moilin' early and late up in the office, an' goin' about thinkin' of nothin' but webs and yarns and flax, that you might turn out a credit to me an' to the poor mother that's dead an' gone. I've been proud of seein' you wid the bucks, tho' you and young Thrimblestone nigh rode over me last week as I was crossing Grafton Street, widout by yer leave, in yer red coats. I've paid all your debts, and given you a fine allowance—an' yer had the best of cattle to ride; an' all I asked in return was that you'd just get an honour, and do something for the family, like young Plunkett, and lots of others. An' Mr. Nagle says you're as clever as any of them, wid a good head for mathematics and larnin' of all kinds. An' what have you done? Answer me that! I'll tell you. Ye've been givin' the supper parties that's breakin' the hearts of the Dane and Faculty. Ye've been neglectin' the leathers and chapels. Ye've been out wherever there's the sportin' an' gamblin' goin' on; keepin' dreadful hours. Ye've been givin' post obits, an' things of that kind, speculatin' on yer father's death. Yer deep in debt to all the money linders in Eustace Street. An' what am I come for now?—to ask you to sthop in time, an' behave well to me, an' I'll behave well to you."

"My dear father, believe me——"

"No; I'll believe nothin' but deeds. Go on as you like—do as

you like—but a return for my money out of you I expect, or you'll be disappointed when I'm gone, Dinny. To show you I'm in earnest I've brought you these."

The old man produced a pocket-book of many pockets from an old case.

"There's yer acceptance to Mulloy for £200—paid ; there's yer account with Hennessy, for horses, £427. 16s.—paid ; there's French's account £180—paid ; there's another of Mulloy's—there's one of Tuke's—here's O'Neale's—there's Dempsey's—a nice lot, 'pon my word—to the valley of £903 paid—that's gettin' on to two thousand pounds, Dinny ; and here's an order on Latouche for £300 for debts I want to know nothing of. I start you fair, I hope ? And now no speeches. Burn those blaggard papers. Ye've three months to the next examination, and I expect to hear of you thin. Good-bye. God bless you. Go on and finish yer —breakfast, Dinny. And remimber—ye can't ate yer cake and have it."

The old man kept his word. On a certain morning in the month of July the Dublin papers contained an advertisement :

"NOTICE.—I hereby give notice that I will not be responsible for the debts contracted by my son, Dionysius Ball, Undergraduate, Trinity College, the said Dionysius being of full age.—(Signed), M. BALL, Linen Hall, Dublin."

Another notice announced that "M. Ball, linen manufacturer, having retired from business, had made over the whole of his interest in the Ballyvogue and Ballymena mills and factories, and in the stores in Belfast and Dublin to his nephew, James Grabb, for whom he requested the support of his old connection."

When Mr. Dionysius Ball had arrived near the end of his college course his father died. His will was opened, and it was found that, having paid to his son, and on his account, the sum of £11,703. 10s. 6d., he, Michael Ball, bequeathed to him the sum of £3,966. 9s. 6d., to complete his education in college, and left the rest of his estate to his wife's relations.

Dionysius Ball set to work ; but it was too late. One day a feeble man, nearly blind from study, was led in, with a shade over his eyes, to the Hall in which the Fellowship Examinations are held, and more than usual interest was evinced, as it became known that "Dandy Ball was going in for a Fellowship." There were five competitors for the golden prize. Dandy Ball was second. Again and again he tried ; always some more brilliant scholar or riper student stood just above him. The examiners, touched by his perseverance, would have gladly seen him win, but it was not to be. After four great efforts he resigned himself to

his fate, and became a "grinder," and eventually a schoolmaster, having taken out his degree in laws. He was distinguished for a melancholy gravity, stately manners, and elegance of dress which seemed out of place in a Dublin dominie. His sole pleasure was found, strangely enough, in assiduous devotion to his pupils, in the study of mathematical problems, and in preparing editions of the classics, more remarkable for fine type, paper, and binding, than for great learning or ingenuity. He had a small living, and refreshed himself on Sunday by preaching highly ornate and polished sermons, which principally dealt with the theories of heathen philosophers, and showed their general inferiority to the Christian scheme in their relations to life on earth.

"An' so you've been fightin' already, and have bet Grierson and Cole secundus," said Larry, as he brought in our shoes, and roused us in the morning. "Faix, purty black eyes as ever I've seed at Donnybrook! It's a nate beginnin' you've med, Prendergast and Brady. Hurry on, and dhress. Dr. Ball wants to see you afore prayers, and thin you've to sthay up here till yer eyes goes out of mourning. Mister Grierson, I'm to have you remov'd to the Sick Ward, and Cole's to shift to No. 8 crib, next dure."

"It is a bad beginning indeed, Maurice," I muttered, as we stood, afraid to knock, outside the door to which we had been shown. "Do you think he'll flog us?"

"Not if he's just. The two big bullies above should get it if any one. I don't intend to be touched, I can tell you." As we spoke, the door was opened from the inside, and the Doctor stood before us; the black velvet cap still on his head, for in my day trencher caps were never used out of college, and a sort of black silk cassock, with upright collar, fitting very tight, fastened round the waist by a band, and coming down so low as only to show the buckles of his shoes, gave him the air of some mediæval ecclesiastic—and the similitude was increased by the flowing white hair, and the snowy turned-over collar and cuffs, which contrasted with his sombre dress.

"Come in, Terence Brady and Maurice Prendergast." We stood in the Sanctum and the Inferno—at once the place of rewards and punishments—the Doctor's study: a wilderness of books—the neatness of his person was by no means indicative of habits of order—with books on shelves, books on chairs, on tables, on the carpet, on the chimney-piece. He drew up with his back to the fire, one hand on his hip, the other outstretched, with the finger pointed to me. "Now, Terence Brady, as you are the elder, give me an account of the manner in which the proceedings of last

night began. I will not say it is your interest to tell the truth, for I would not appeal to a base motive when you stand in my presence." I told him the truth. As I spoke, he listened attentively, and turned his eyes from me to Maurice, and never asked a question till the close, and then he said—"Brady, do you forgive the boy who began this trouble freely and fully from your heart?"

"I do, sir."

"Prendergast, I ask you the same question!"

Maurice hesitated. He looked down and was silent.

"It is not necessary for you to answer me. I regret you still feel enmity to Cole; depend on it you would be happier if you could say as your friend has done. You may go."

If any dreamer cherishes visions of Utopia as possible realities, let him remember what his life was at a school, and cease to hope. Who can withstand the tyranny of that oligarchy which arises in the little republic, and which has ever a despot of its own? For two years my life was as bearable, in virtue of my prowess on the night of my arrival, as the duress of attendance and compulsory learning could make it. I was chosen into the upper twenty for our hurling-matches, after one or two hard fights. Daddy Grierson, the very first day he came into the green where we played, pale and limping as he was, shook hands with me *coram publico*, and declared—"Brady is one of the old stock. The Doctor told me he took all the blame on himself." My reputation was made by the stories which had gone abroad over the school, for Grierson was one of the Ajaxes of the field. Maurice Prendergast did not fare so well. He had refused to make it up with Cole, and the result was a pitched battle, in which Maurice got rather the worst of it, and he was unfortunate enough to appear as if he did not accept the public judgment with good grace. Dr. Ball heard of the encounter, and in ordering him and his antagonist punishment, publicly expressed his regret that one of his boys exhibited such vindictiveness.

Maurice had in him some unhappy knack of thinking everything which occurred in the world of an unpleasant nature was specially ordered with reference to himself—that all around were plotting to do him mischief—that he alone was singled out for annoyance, and perchance for punishment. His spirit was dark and moody. He had listened at home to old stories about the greatness of the family of Prendergast in the time of Strongbow, till he believed their present poverty was the result of a great conspiracy on the part of King, Lords, and Commons; and he was continually revolving schemes in his head for their restoration to the lordship

of barbarously-named regions which had long since merged into baronies and counties. The mind of the boy, in fact, was warped by this one idea—that he was the victim of wrong and injustice ; and as he was of a studious turn, and read more than most boys of his years, turning his attention to what may be called the fabulous history of Ireland, and swallowing without hesitation the preparations of the annalists and national historians who doctor facts or invent nostrums to suit their theories, he became an eager politician.

There were Repealers and Reformers in those days. Dr. Ball's was an eminently Protestant academy, and Maurice Prendergast chose to avow himself a Repealer and a Reformer, and to stand in a minority of one. You know what the toleration of a school is. It is there that the philosopher may study the way in which the will of a majority, without checks, becomes a cruel despotism. Maurice clung to his faith, and took a gloomy delight in suffering persecution, which was moral rather than physical. There is no misery so great as to burn with the love of country which is treason—to be possessed with the patriotism of a broken nationality, which is sustained by dreams, and visions, and hopes—lives and dies again till the end, whatever that may be—extinction and oblivion—or resurrection. Maurice believed that petitions, and public meetings, and processions of ill-clad citizens, with bad bands and worse banners, would induce the British Government to restore a native legislature to Ireland. He wore a green riband in his cap, and gilt buttons, with a harp and crown, and the device of Repeal, on his coat. He read immense quantities of speeches, and learnt whole Iliads of national poetry, and was looked on as a vulgar malcontent, who must be a rebel at heart, as well as a Papist. He was cut out of our games, and placed under a proscription, which he resented by aggressive war whenever he got a chance. It was with difficulty I could keep on good terms with him because I would not join him in ostracising the whole school ; but at night, ere we closed our eyes, we were generally good friends again. I pitied him greatly, for often and often I heard his suppressed sobbing, and his cries in his sleep, and knew how much he endured in his gloomy spirit.

I had my own sorrows. There was for ever, when I was alone, no thought but that one wearing, wearying solicitude that was the morbid centre around which all my future plans were woven. I had a faith that my mother lived. The more I reasoned on the subject, the greater seemed the improbability—the larger and firmer grew the faith. I had of course given up all idea of taking the picture to Dublin the moment I had seen my room and under-

stood the nature of boys at school ; but every trait was preserved in my memory, and I made endless efforts to put them on paper, destroying the scraps as fast as I drew them. I grew strong and tall, was famous at hurling, football, and prison-bar, which are the substitutes for cricket. On my half-holidays I went up the little stream which passed the school-gates on its way from the mountains to Dublin Bay. Faithful to my early love, I fished away till night approached, returning happy, but footsore, with my creel pretty well stocked with trout, which the Doctor used to take tithe of for his Sunday morning's breakfast ere he proceeded to his church, a quarter of an hour in advance of the column led by Mr. Cuffe, and closed by the rear-guard under Monsieur Lebœuf. Sometimes Maurice came with me ; but he was so immersed in his ridiculous books that he was not much of a companion. Besides, he was always fancying that the boys he met intended to affront him, and was getting into endless rows, in which black eyes and bloody noses were ingredients ; and if he took to fishing, it was in a passionate spirit, quite unsuited to the contemplative man's recreation. If the fish were rising, he was in the greatest spirits. The little ones went flourishing in the air over his head, coming down far behind him on the stones with a whack which left them hardly time to shiver ere they died : the big ones, not numerous, carried away gut or flies, or broke tops, or lost their snouts—rarely were they landed ; and when Maurice executed a feat of this kind he hopped and jumped about with rage. When an east wind, or a general indigestion, or some mysterious agency only known to fishes, kept them with their heads below the surface, Maurice, after a few impatient casts—well thrown and fine for the matter of that—would put up his rod in dudgeon, swear there was no use in trying any more, and be greatly surprised when he found my creel pretty full at night. So I was often left alone in my excursions into the mountain valley, where the little stream became a succession of pools of dark peat-coloured water, swarming with tiny hungry trout. Latterly I often met a broad, stout man, of some thirty or five-and-thirty years of age, fishing with more perseverance than success. He had a swarthy, sunburnt visage, black whiskers and eyes, shining white teeth, and a pleasant look and smile—so frank and kindly, that at last I ventured to fish in the pools below him, and to take the liberty of crossing behind and going above him when I saw he took no notice. And then we got on nodding terms.

I was quite glad to hear his cheery voice, although it was only—"Hullo ! youngster ; and so here you are again. We won't leave a trout in the river between us, though I know who'll take most of them."

And his laugh was delightful as he compared his basket with mine after a while. "Well done, youngster! Two dozen and three. And a couple of whoppers! Just see what I've done—only seven. But I'm getting on—I'm getting on, and I'll beat you at last."

I showed him my flies, and told him what I thought hindered him from being a great angler: he would persist in standing close to the banks, and hopping about from stone to stone, like an ouzel. His delight was great when one day he succeeded in hooking and killing a two-pounder at the tail of a dam. "Dash my wig! but you are right. I've been trying for that fellow ever since I began at this work, and only for you I'd never have caught him. Isn't he a beauty? Talk of dolphins—stuff! There's colour for you—there's speckled sides. I wouldn't take ten gold mohurs for him this moment."

The word "mohur" struck me at once. I had heard it often from Mohun. "Were you ever in India, sir?" I asked.

"Yes, my lad. That is, I've been cruising about in the Indian Ocean—served on the station some time; but beyond a day or two at Madras and at Galle, a sail up the Hooghly, and a short time at Calcutta, I can't say I know much of the land."

"Did you ever know Captain Brady out there, sir?"

"Brady! Brady! What was he, a soldier or a sailor?"

"Oh, sir, my father was a gentleman: Captain Brady, of the King's Own Regiment," said I, offended at the idea of its being supposed he was a sailor.

"Faith, I beg your pardon; I forgot our profession is not thought much of in these parts. And so your name's Brady, is it? And you're at school near here, learning your *propria quæ maribus*—'things proper to the seas,' as I translated it, and got a hiding—eh? Where is it?"

"I am at Dr. Ball's, of Hume Grove."

"Are you going to be a soldier, like your father?"

"I don't know, sir. I should like to be a soldier, but my grandfather will not hear of it."

"Grandfather won't hear of it? Rich old codger—must have his way. And what does your governor say of it, eh?"

"My father is dead; he died in India several years ago, when I was but a baby."

"And of course mamma sides with grandpapa—does she?"

"I cannot say, sir. I have not seen my mother. It is supposed she is dead; but I don't think so."

We had been walking along as we talked; but as I uttered these words my interlocutor turned round briskly, with a look of

surprise on his honest brown face. "Say that again, till I just get its bearings. You haven't seen your mother, and it is supposed she is dead, but you don't think so! That's a rum sort of thing to say, my lad."

"Well, it is true, sir. They all believe mamma was drowned coming home from India; but I feel—I feel it here," I said, laying my hand on my heart—"that I shall see her, and that she is alive."

"Dash my wig, Master Brady, but you are puzzling me. And so," he added, with a look of softness in his big round eyes, "you don't like to believe your mother is down among—hem—I mean is drowned? Why so, if every one else says she was?"

"Because no one can be sure of it. When the ship struck, she was washed off with ever so many others, and they say she was lost. But the ship was near an island—near Les Basses rocks, off the coast of Ceylon."

"And the ship's name was?"

"The *Ross-shire* Indiaman."

The angler struck the butt of his rod against the ground and whistled out a prolonged whew-w-w, and repeated my words. "The *Ross-shire*! The Basses! Why, to be sure! to be sure! I remember it well. I was lying in Galle at the time in the *Calypso*, on my first long cruise, and saw her come in after she was got off by the skipper. They made a jolly fuss about his getting her off. He ought to have been reprimanded for getting her on, say I. And Mrs. Brady—the beautiful Mrs. Brady—was your mother, my poor lad? How very, very odd to meet you here!"

My heart was beating so that I could hear it like the wheel of the mill close at hand. "Oh dear, dear sir, did you ever see my mamma?"

"No," he answered, shortly, "never—often heard of her. But if that Brady was your father, I remember him well when he was a sub. at Malta and I was a midddy; and a better fellow never lived—for a soldier, no better. I heard of his marriage, of his death, and of his wife's being drowned from the *Ross-shire*, and I remember well hearing that their infant was on board—wretched little beggar—on his way to Ireland. Oh Lord, to think I should meet you this way, on the banks of the Dodder, in this confounded country." He looked at me so kindly, I took his hand and pressed it, and the honest fellow returned the pressure with a gripe of irresistible vigour. "Here," cried he, "sit down on this bank, and let us talk about everything. It is so very odd to think how things come about. I wish I could recollect all I heard

about Brady and his wife. There were lots of stories ; but that's of no consequence. The strange thing is you should persist in it that she's alive, my boy ; as if it would be any advantage to you if she were, by all accounts. My belief is that she's just as dead—as dead," he said, taking up a pebble and throwing it into the pool at our feet, "as that stone."

I said nothing, but sat looking into the bright stream.

"I tell you what, my lad," he continued, "you go moping about by yourself too much. I'll ask your master to let me give you a cruise now and then in the Bay. Wouldn't that be jolly ! My name is Window ; any fellow can see through me, they say, and I command the *Merlin* cutter for my sins—a revenue cruiser, if you know what that means. Here, take this card to your schoolmaster, and tell him I will call on him to ask leave to take you out now and then—from Saturday till Monday, you see. We have prayers on board on Sundays—capital chaplain ; read service myself ; and we'll have a run down to Wicklow and back, if you like."

On the card was "Lieutenant John Window, R.N., H.M.C. *Merlin*." I knew nothing of the sea ; I could indeed see the blue waters of the Bay from my bedroom window, and the white sails of the ships as they slid along from one headland to the other. Oftentimes I noted the trails of smoke from the packets, and watched the funnels and masts as they came in sight from behind trees and chimneys ; but of the sea itself I had a secret, subtle terror. I remembered little of my early voyage. But the impressions of its force, its cruelty, its irresponsible power, its sullen anger and destroying rage, were derived somehow from the very beginning of my existence, and were mingled with a sort of antipathy to a thing which had done me irreparable wrong. However, the love of adventures such as this, and the getting away from school, were very strong inducements to say "yes," and I expressed my thanks to Lieutenant Window, R.N., for his kindness.

"And now," said he, "I must be off. I have to walk across to the coast near Bray, and I don't want to run out my daylight. I will call soon on old Ball and get leave for you. Good-bye, my lad ; you had better top your boom and make sail too." And with a smile which showed his white teeth the sailor turned from the stream, putting up his rod as he went, and was soon making his way with light and active step up the hill-side towards the Three Rock mountain. My path lay towards Dublin, in the outskirts of which the school was situated ; and as I trudged back my mind was full of questions which were to be put to my new acquaintance at our next meeting.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CRUISE.

I HAD not long to wait. The next week saw the beginning of the short vacation at Easter, and my grandfather had written to say he thought, as the old house was under repair, and the typhus was very bad in the district, I had better stay at Dr. Ball's. "There is no one at the Castle," he added, "and you will have your friend Maurice to keep you company at all events for your week's holiday."

I was in our cubicle, arranging my flies for a grand excursion which was to last two days, and Maurice was packing up hard-boiled eggs, a pot of jam, and other luxuries, when the servant informed me, "The Doctor wants you, Masther Brady." It was rarely we were summoned to the presence, and I scarcely needed the addition, "I think yer goin' off somewhere, and maybe I'd best get ready yer duds, for there's a gintilman on a kyar has come, and they're waiting below."

When I entered the study, the pleasant face of the Lieutenant greeted me. But instead of his fishing suit he had on an undress uniform, and a cap with a gold band in his hand, and looked very smart. Dr. Ball and he had been engaged in looking over the large globe, on which the latter was pointing the course of some voyage in distant seas, and the former was in great good humour, for he had had an opportunity of astonishing his visitor by the accuracy of his knowledge.

"So, Brady, you have met a friend of your father's. I am always glad to promote the education of the gentlemen in my establishment by favouring their intercourse with persons who are able to improve their minds and cultivate their intellects—above all with such enlightened travellers as Mr. Window, a member of a glorious profession, to which England owes so much of its greatness"—here the Doctor bowed, and looked as if he had enunciated some striking and novel proposition—"therefore," he continued, with more dignity, "I have yielded to Captain——"

"Only Lieutenant, if you please, Dr. Ball," interrupted Window, with a laugh.

"I do not please, sir—I think you ought to be Captain Window; but I admit the propriety of your objecting to the use of a designation which were yours already had services such as we are discussing been duly recognised. Pardon the remark; I was saying, Brady, that I have yielded to Lieutenant Window's representations, and have permitted you to go from beneath my tutelage,

in order that he may take you on a short marine excursion and impart to you some rudimentary instruction in the art of navigation."

"Nay, Doctor, I'm not quite sure I can promise to do much in that way. You see, when I'm on board I've a good deal to do, though I have no company; and fresh air, plain, wholesome food, and a little change, are all I can promise our young friend, though he may study 'Norie' if he likes. We must look pretty sharp," he added, looking at his watch; "the boat is waiting for us at the Pigeon-house, and the cutter is inside the Wall lying-to till we come. The tide's running out, and if she has to go outside we may have a long row, and get wet jackets, for there's been a fresh breeze from the southward, and the sea's not quite gone down."

The Doctor waved his hand, and in a few minutes I was seated on the car beside Lieutenant Window rattling over the road to Ringsend, at the speed which a Dublin jarvey always considers due to an "officer."

There is ever something or other of acid in the cup of our pleasures: mine was flavoured by a drop distilled from Maurice's eyes. As I hurriedly told him of my little voyage, he looked up from his haversack with a face full of mortification, and said, "I thought so. You might have told me of this before. Just as I am ready for the only little day's pleasure I have had since I came to this horrid place, and was going to see what I was longing for, the Round Tower and all, you throw me over. I can go with no one else. There." He took up his bag and dashed it against the wall, bursting into tears as he spoke, whilst the blood-red stains of the cherry cordial and the jam on the surbase proclaimed the ruin he had made.

I set off, wondering whether I was not really a selfish fellow to disappoint Maurice, and full of regrets for the jam and cherry cordial.

"Yes, my lad, there will be a little swell on when we get into the Bay; but the wind is light, and we'll take a run down towards the Arklow Banks, and maybe we'll show you some of your favourite sport on a large scale."

"Are there any whales, sir?" quoth I, eagerly. "There are British whales, I know, and I don't see why they should not come to Ireland, too."

"Whales? No, my lad; at least, not to catch. If British whales were wise, they'd keep away from these waters; but there are more sharks than I like—smugglers, in fact. There is a confounded schooner we have heard of, which has run a whole cargo

of Yankee tobacco and French brandy lately, between Arklow and this. Stubbs, who had the cutter before me, was removed for that same, and I'm put here to prevent the same occurring again. Hope I may, but can't be sure."

The car rattled along the South Wall, drove slowly over the Pigeon-house Fort-bridge, and I was aroused from my survey of what seemed to me the bustling river, filled with craft running down with the tide for sea, by a "Look sharp, my lad! here we are. Take these traps, Robert, and stow them away in the gig." Led by Lieutenant Window down the slippery causeway, I took my place where I was told, in the stern of the boat, which was a marvel of whiteness and brightness in wood, and paint, and brass, in my eyes. The crew, with their clean shirts and snowy trowsers, were in keeping with the boat. As the Lieutenant said—"Now, give way there!" there was a tone in his voice I had never heard before, not near so pleasant and so soft. "There, Brady—or, if you'll let me, Terry—there's the *Merlin*. How do you like her?"

Alas! how full life is of disappointment. I had had more than my share that week. Of all created things, it appeared to me the elephant and the lion must be the grandest: the size and sagacity of the first, the port and courage of the latter, excited my admiration. I had pored over the "Wild Sports of the West," and travels, and natural history, and had formed ideals in my mind, with the help of plates and illustrations, which turned out to be pure illusions the moment I paid my sixpence and entered Wombwell's travelling menagerie. That scrubby, wrinkled, shapeless beast, without any tusks, and with a flabby proboscis, not much taller than our bull "Rogueen!"—that lank-sided, over-grown cat, with a ragged felt of hair over his shoulders, crouching at the sight of the keeper's iron rod!—that an elephant!—that a tiger!—these were bitter things to see and bear! And now there came another shock. My grandfather had once made a voyage on board a transport, forming one of a fleet under a small convoy which was attacked by the French off Ushant. I had often listened to his account of the action, in which not only the men-of-war but the transports behaved so well, that they beat off the enemy, and took *Le Grand Condé*, of seventy-two guns. A print to commemorate the feat hung in the dining-room, and I had spent many an hour admiring the bulk of the vessel, crowded with troops, and of the line-of-battle ships blazing into each other from their warlike sides. A man-of-war, to my mind, was a floating castle, with banners and streamers, and figure-heads and stern-galleries—like those in the print, and in the pictures of "sea-fights," by the Dutch painters, in the gallery at the Castle—towering above the waters, with rows

of ports and grinning cannon-mouths. And now, as I looked in a line with Window's forefinger, I doubted my senses as I beheld a craft, the size of a fishing-smack, as I thought, about a mile away from us, with foresail aback, and mainsail loose, which lay rising and falling on the swell, and showing us at every rise the sheen of her burnished copper. "Well, and what do you think her, my lad?"

"Isn't she very little, sir?" I faltered out.

"Little? Why she's the largest cutter in the service, my boy; one hundred and ninety tons, and as good as ever was built. Wait till you get on board. Feel at all queer, my boy?"

The expression of my face referred to my disappointment at the size of *H.M.C. Merlin*, rather than any other internal discomfort. When I stood on the broad, white deck, and looked at the huge mast and the ponderous boom, I was somewhat comforted, and my peace was perfectly restored when, after an inspection of my cabin, which was a miracle of contrivances and neatness, I patted the long eighteen-pounder forward, and caressed the carronades which formed the broadside guns of the little craft. In a few moments more the uneasy sensation, and the motion which obliged me to catch hold of ropes, or gripe Window's brawny fist, was exchanged for a buoyant, gliding feeling, as the *Merlin*, clothed in her whole suit of snowy sails, careened over, and bowled past the Light-house with a fair breeze on the quarter. It was glorious! To watch the land recede, and the hills, in whose recesses glided my little trout-stream, grow less—the Light-house and the long low wall extending into the sea, run by us, and the smoke over Dublin become fainter—to skim past the laborious colliers and fishing-smacks—and then, as we slipped by the many-coloured Hill of Howth, and stood towards the south, to gaze on new scenes opening, and the expanse of sea growing wider still. Glorious, too, to see the green waves, with their creamy tops, coming on to meet us, like an army in battle array flouting its banners! glorious to drive them into confused flight of spray and water, and rush on to fresh encounters with the victorious cheering of the wind through our sails. Oh! terrible sea, you conquer in the end: beaten in the skirmish, you are dreadful and pitiless in the shock of battle.

"'Pon my word, Terry, you'll make as good a sailor as any of us. How do you like it now?"

"It's delightful, sir; I'm so thankful to you. Only for this, I would have hated the sea, and feared it too."

"Well, this is fine-weather sailing, my boy; and I hope we'll have no worse, for your sake. Come down to dinner—it's ready now, and you ought to be ready for it. Mind your head. Mr.

Tiller, here's a young friend, Master Brady, who is going to take a cruise with us, and you must give him fine weather, for we are going to have a great haul of fishes."

Mr. Tiller, and his chief, and I, had a most delightful afternoon. There was beautiful soup—quite different from Mother Murphy's preparations at Dr. Ball's; but it was not so much the excellence of the soup, as the difficulty of getting it to the mouth, which commended itself to me. There was a Dublin Bay haddock, boiled chicken and bacon, salt beef, and a roly-poly pudding; and then there were Tiller's anecdotes of artful smugglers, and more artful revenue-men, in which there was very little bloodshed and a great deal of glory, set off by Tiller in language which was evidently deprived of a natural garniture of an imprecatory nature by the presence of "Captain Window." Up on deck, afterwards, it was of never-ending interest to look through the glass, as soon as I had learned to use it, at the objects on shore, and to pry into the crannies of the Wicklow mountains, to watch the people on the beach, to study the towns and villages, to observe the signals to the cutter from the coastguard stations, and to see our mute speech fluttering up and down as the old quarter-master spelt out the messages and prepared the answers. I went to bed at night, swaying on my knees by the side of my cot as I prayed for those at home, and in the depths of my heart breathed the supplication that Heaven would preserve me till I could penetrate the mystery of my life, and fill the aching void in my heart.

It was a strange troubled sleep into which I fell. It seemed as though I were awake, and that the vessel gradually grew in height and breadth as she ploughed through the seas, which swelled higher and higher, and rose over her deck, till at last the beating waves rushed over us like mountains, but could not keep the *Merlin* in their power. The sound of the sea as it swished by my pillow, separated from the power of death by a few planks, was filled, I thought, with voices of crying and lamenting. Looking out into the green depth, I saw there were myriads of people floating in the sea, and holding up their hands in supplication. The waves were crowded with infinite multitudes in white, wafted to and fro in the currents, amid which long seaweeds were waving, and monsters of awful form passed on their way in and out of profound caves in the earth. Many of these ghastly creatures, clutching the ship as she passed, clomb over her sides and got upon the deck, where they sat huddled together. Some came down into the cabin and sat by our little fire. I could not make out their faces they were so white and expressionless, shifting in feature and in colour every moment. But at last Mohun came down, shivering and wet, and by his side

was a tall form swathed in snowy drapery. He pointed to me. My heart gave one great throb, ceased to beat, then struck the sides of its prison with mighty blows. The veiled woman came towards me, and, as I struggled to rise, she lifted her veil, stretched out her arms—ah? that lovely face!—"Mother! mother darling!" I cried, and leaped from my cot to meet her; but at the instant the vessel shook as though she would split. I was thrown on my face, and a deluge of water flooded the little cabin.

"Make fast the deadlights," shouted Window from the top of the companion. As I got to my feet he came towards the door, with the rays of the lamp shining on his tarpaulin hat, in a thick pea-jacket, on which beads of spray sparkled like diamonds, his whiskers heavy with moisture.

"Don't be frightened, Terry, my boy," said he, seeing me in my shirt; "go to your blankets again, and to sleep, if you can. But hold on tight by your eyebrows. We are in for a blow; the glass has gone down like a shot, and while we were shortening sail the cutter took in a little more water than we wanted. But she's all snug now, and if you like to see what a good sou'-wester can do in the Irish Channel on a short notice, I have no doubt we'll be able to oblige you. Good night, my lad. Stea-dy—ah? There now, in you go—good night."

Instead of taking easy and rather short dips into the water as she had done, the *Merlin* was now in for very long plunges and very high flights. I watched from my cot the pier-glass over the little fireplace in the cabin rising higher and higher, till it seemed to be trying to stand over me. Then the glass stood still for a part of a second, as if to make up its mind what to do, and abandoning the effort to mount higher, began to slide downwards, sinking faster and faster, till I could look upon it at my feet. Then a determination to try again, set the polished surface and the lamp which was reflected in the centre on the ascent once more.

I watched and listened to the dull roar of the waters, and the southing of the wind mingled with the thud of feet, till I fell asleep, and slept on amid the storm. A hand on my shoulder woke me, and Jack Window's big bright eyes and ever-genial smile glanced in on me. He was still shiny with wet oil-skins, and dripping beard and boots as before; and as he swayed to and fro, it was easy to see the *Merlin* was yet hawking up and down in the seaway after her unknown prey.

"By Jove, Terry, you're a trump," he exclaimed; "I'm so glad you've stood it all so well. It has been a snorter, and it's not over yet; but the glass is rising a little, and it's shifting now to the west; so we'll have it off the land, and it can't do us any harm. I

needn't ask you how you've slept. I had a few peeps at you after the capsizes you got, and you're a credit to Dr. Ball and the Seven Sleepers. And now it's time to rouse out and get breakfast. The steward has got out your oldest clothes, and I've got some tarpaulins for you in case you'd like to look at what's going on outside presently."

"And did you get up to look at me? How very kind you are, Mr. Window. I am quite ashamed to give you this trouble."

"Up! my boy. Why, do you think I could turn in such a night? No; that's the worst of it in a small craft like this. No relief for me. The captain here is his own first luff, keeps his own watch and every one else's. It's a bad place to lie-to in. No end of great hulking Yankee liners and East and West Indians running up with such a good wind for Liverpool, not caring a dump what they run over. Not to talk of Irish pig-boats and rascally steamers from and to all parts of the world. I'll get a good snooze presently; and when you're all right we'll have our breakfast."

When I put my head above the companion, my first impulse was to rush back to the cabin instantly. A vast pile of water coming towards the little vessel shut out all the sea beside, and left only visible a grey sky, against which its broken fringe, crowned with seething foam, stood out sharp and distinct, as, like some hill-side green and steep, it appeared to roll down on the cutter. But the good sea bird, just dipping her beak into its base, fanning her tiny wing of canvas, mounted the steep side—up, and up, till she rode midst the hissing foam, and then, balancing herself with a slight shiver, and a heave forward, as though she were about to leave the sea, swooped down the other side of the billow, eager to meet its fellow fast following in its course. It was scarcely possible to believe I was on board the same ship. The *Merlin* had moulted her snowy plumage—her topmast was struck, jib-boom run in, and two tiny sails, wet and dark, represented the volumes of canvas in which she had been clad so gloriously. The smart man-of-war's men, whom I had seen yesterday in turn-down collars, flowing duck trousers, and dandy jackets, were now represented by a few uncouth-looking fellows in heavy jack-boots, with oilskin coats and sou'-westers, crouched down under the bulwarks, or anxiously watching the seas as the helmsman met the rise and fall. From the summit of each wave the scene was ever the same—a circle, with ragged margin, enclosing a raging tumultuous mass of watery hillocks topped with white, all moving in order onwards, with valleys cleft deep between, the same cold grey sky as a background to fantastic cloud-shapes, hurrying on ghost-like as if running races with the waves beneath.

"Is this a hurricane, Mr. Window?" I asked; "it is very awful."

"Lord bless you, this is nothing. It is a strong sou'-wester, that's all. It has come on very suddenly; but, as there was some sea before, there's a pretty run on. It's something more than a strong breeze, and perhaps it's a good half gale of wind. If we were in the old *Ramillies*, or even my old pet the *Phaeton*, we'd feel it more, I promise you. There's nothing like a roomy cutter for such weather; and the *Merlin* is as good a craft as ever Jack Window would like to be in—that is, for bad weather, my lad; for she's no good for pay, promotion, or what you call *kudos* in your school. Now, then, breakfast. We must do the best we can, as the cook can't work the galley very well."

And such a breakfast! How the little table was made to look like a window without glass, being covered with a framework, into which our crockery fitted! How my coffee, instead of going into my mouth was shot down my neck! What desperate work it was to keep in one's seat, though it was bolted to the deck! What infinite delight I took in seeing the Lieutenant holding on to the table, at one time bobbing his head half across it, and the next nearly hitting it against the side! How very clever it was of the steward to take advantage of the pauses in the general unsteadiness, and to make a little run with *petit pas* steps, holding a dish in each hand, and to bring himself bolt up, and with an eye on each dish, and his feet apart, to sway gently over to counteract the roll of the ship; and then take a bend to the other side, till he could make good his landing in the cabin! All these things, and many others, made that marine breakfast most agreeable to me, not to speak of the unknown condiments and edibles fished out of tins, and canisters, and jars of many shapes and sizes.

Mr. Tiller looked in, very like a huge slug, so shiny and black was he.

"The glass is not what I'd like to see it yet, sir," he said. "I think we're in for a little more of it."

"Only for my friend here, whom I've taken out for a pleasure cruise, I don't suppose it makes so much difference to you or me, does it?"

"For pleasure, did he?" said Mr. Tiller, looking at me with evident pity. "He hadn't heard the proverb about those who go to sea for pleasure, I suppose, then? Pervided there was more sea-room, he'd not do badly, would he, sir, for a beginner? It's hard to tell where we are, and there won't be much chance of getting a look at the sun to-day."

"Perhaps we'll see the land," said I, innocently.

"God forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Tiller, "The worst thing could happen us, unless hitting on it without seeing it."

Mr. Tiller was right. The weather became worse instead of better; and the wind, veering round towards evening, brought up a cross sea, in which the *Merlin* laboured frightfully. I could see by the face of the good Lieutenant that it was no laughing matter when a thump and a squashing sound announced the breaking of a wave, which rushed over the deck. The wings of the cutter had been pared and cut down to a mere feather, which, wet and strained to the utmost, seemed bent on flying away altogether, and pulled at the stays in desperation. Nothing so much astonished me as our solitude. I knew we could not be very far from land on one side or the other. Then we were in the highway of ships in the channel, and yet not a sign of one appeared on the surface of the storm-riven shield. When night set in, the tempest raged more furiously than ever. I began to understand how hard must be the life of men whose business is on the waters. In the darkness of my little manger-like cot I lay awake, watching the lamp in the saloon through the doorway swinging to and fro, and listening to the howling of the wind and the never-ceasing rush of the sea—my thoughts for ever wandering to that Indian shore where all was hidden. The morning came; and, haggard and worn, with bloodshot eyes, my poor Lieutenant greeted me with his cheerful smile.

"It is well you slept so soundly, Terry. It blew great guns, I can tell you—nearly a gale, my lad. But the wind has suddenly fallen; the sea will soon follow it. You never stirred during the row on deck, when the big steamer came down on us; passed us two boats' lengths off in the middle of the hardest blow."

The sea was a long time going down, I thought, but towards evening we saw the land on our starboard bow. At nightfall we were running down towards a light, which began to show in the gloaming, flashing out and disappearing, and flashing out again; and as I turned in, the Lieutenant announced we would be in smooth water and lie snugly inside Carnsore in the morning.

"It is most provoking, Terry. I don't know what Doctor Ball will say to me," said Jack at breakfast, "but I have been signalled from the Coast-guard Station to go round to Cove for orders. There must be something up, I expect, and I can't land and send you from this fag end of the world to Dublin by yourself. There is no mistake about it."

Mr. Tiller made his appearance at the cabin door.

"They're at it again, sir. They have just signalled for the cutter to stand in, as they want to communicate, and will send off a boat.

"In other words, Old Grubb wants a yarn, and anything else he can get on board. Run in close as you can, and call me when he's within hail. Even half an hour or so will refresh a fellow who's been without sleep so long as I have, just enough to make him wish for the other seven hours."

We were closing in towards the land, which was marked by a belt of foam, and the surf pelting the base of rocky bluff. Above the line of black and white rose the green hillocks, which gradually faded into the purple haze of the mountainous background; and in a cleft in the strong battlements behind which the land resisted the encroaching sea, the bright whitewashed Coast-guard Station, with many little flags flying from the signal-staff, was visible. A speck on the waters, rising now on the top of a billow, and now lost for an anxious interval, could be made out with the glass; and as the cutter, fast running up sail after sail to make way against the ebb in the faint wind, rolled and lurched, yawed in the trough of the sea, and wobbled about on the top of the waves, there was a thumping of blocks and a flapping of canvas, a creaking of bulkheads, and general unsteadiness about us, which made the calm seem more dangerous than the storm, and gave me the idea that the *Merlin*, having become hopelessly upset in her behaviour during the last four-and-twenty hours, was determined never to become a sensible, well-regulated cutter again.

"Did you catch him that time, Grummett?" asked Mr. Tiller of the old Quartermaster, who, with one arm round a rattlin and the other propping the telescope against a shroud, was watching the progress of the boat.

"No, Mr. Tiller. I saw Mr. Grubb plain enough in the starn-sheet, but I couldn't make out the other."

"Steady! Here she comes again. Ah! it's my opinion as it's the commodore himself is coming aboard."

In a short time all doubt on the subject of the illustrious visitor's identity was dissipated, and the Lieutenant roused up and went on deck to receive Captain Dumbleton, C.B., chief of all revenue cutters and coast-guards, and their belongings. It was no easy matter to do so, for the cutter rolled savagely in the swell, and Captain Dumbleton was not formed for feats of agility. But after a good deal of approaching and sheering-off, fending off and laying hold and letting go, a line was made fast to the Coast-guard boat, and presently the good-natured potentate was on the deck of the *Merlin*, followed by the gentleman I had heard designated as "Old Grubb," who was another stout mariner, with a broad red face and rheumy eyes, and much difficulty of breathing.

"I never was so pleased in my life, Window, as when we made out your number this morning! The *Sarah Sykes* has made her appearance again! Before it came on to blow I ordered them at all the stations to send you down at once, but I never expected you so soon. The *Hawk* left last Thursday night for Cove; the *Barnwell* has orders to communicate with her, and as you are so handy we really ought to catch her now."

"The *Sarah Sykes*! Indeed, sir."

"Yes. Was seen on Wednesday off the Black Bank; we have heard she left Treport, on her return from America, with a full cargo. That scoundrel Driscoll is in command of her, and he swears he'll land it or fight it on shore; so I have brought you some extra hands, and we must see if we can't catch him this time."

And Captain Dumbleton, taking the Lieutenant aside, talked to him in whispers, whilst Mr. Grubb and Mr. Tiller entered into a general conversation and gossip of a coast and coast-guard character, to which in my ignorance I paid no great attention.

"Brady, eh?" quoth old Grubb; "I wonder if he's son of Major Brady of Bradyville, the member for Sligo? I like being civil to Parliament people's sons. When my case comes before the House, it's as well to have them on my side, though I know if it's justice is to be done, I don't need help from anybody after that case is stated. And so, Master Brady, you've come to sea for a lark? Well, you can tell your father, Major Brady, when you see him, that you had a very nice excursion. Pray remember me to him. My name is Grubb—Grubb, of the Coast-guard. He'll know all about my salvage claim."

"My father," said I, "is not alive; and he was not Major, but Captain Brady."

"Captain Brady? I knew him too. He was member for Cashel, wasn't he? As good a fellow as ever stepped."

"No, sir; my father was a member for no place. He was in the King's Own, and died out in India."

"The very man, I'm sure! Wasn't his father member for Leitrim? I knew both him and his son, and I must have known your mamma very well. If I am not mistaken, she was sister to Sir Thaddeus Standish, the member for Clare, and——"

"Mr. Grubb," interrupted Captain Dumbleton, who had overheard the last part of the speech, "I'm sure we are about to get on that Parliamentary question; and as I have never been able to tell my county member the full particulars, perhaps you would wait till we get on shore."

"My mother's name was not Standish, at all events. It was

Billing," rejoined I; "she was drowned when the *Ross-shire* East Indiaman went ashore on the coast of Ceylon."

"To be sure! to be sure!" continued Captain Dumbleton. "You and I remember it well. You were in Gallee, Window, in the *Calypso*, and I was at Penang, in the *Siren*, at the time; and I recollect people saying how odd it was that those poor people were lost, and that it was said your mamma was seen alive afterwards."

Stretching out my hands, I cried—"Oh, for pity's sake! tell me, sir——" when a roll of the cutter caused me to lose my balance. Ere I could catch at anything to save myself, I was thrown against the railing of the low bulwark.

There was a sound as of voices infinite in my ears, and a rushing, as if of life with a thousand feet, towards the portals of its prison. I was a good swimmer; and as soon as the shock was over, I turned and struck up for the green light above me. But what is this which settles on me like a wall, bars out the light, and presses me down and down beneath the cruel waters?

* * * * *

"You had indeed a narrow squeak of it! I could not see you when I dived, and I don't think I ever was so happy in my life as when I rose, and heard them sing out from the cutter that they had you. My poor boy!—what would I have done? But what signifies that? What would your grandfather and all your friends have done, if you had been drowned under my very eyes! Thank God, my boy, thank God! I never will, I swear, take man, woman, or child on a cruise again!"

The voice was dear old Jack's, as he sat beside me in my cot.

I had come up under the counter at the opposite side of the cutter, and as the *Merlin* heeled over she pressed me down, and was drowning me, when the next roll liberated me, nearly lifeless as I was; I was just seen in time by one of the men in the coast-guard boat, who, with a lucky thrust of the boathook with which he was fending off, grappled my clothes and hauled me to the surface, where I was secured and hoisted on board, rubbed, and dosed with brandy, and covered with blankets, till I began to undergo the horrors of "coming to," from which I had emerged as Jack sat with my hand in his, and his arm under my head.

"And now we must do the best we can. The Commodore, as we call him, would not wait, as soon as he saw you were all right, or I would have sent you on shore and trusted him to restore you to the arms of Dr. Ball. We are running down the coast, keeping

a sharp look-out for a rascally smuggler—the only real one of the sort we have had to deal with for many a year—a Baltimore clipper, sailed by one Mr. Driscoll, an Irish American—and if it falls to my lot to sight the gentleman he won't find it easy to escape. It's not glorious work, Terry, but it may do me good—and God knows I want something to do that."

In the evening, when I got upon deck, the sun was sinking over the hills of Waterford, and cast its last beams over the heaving sea, which still felt the passion of its conflict. The brown-faced sailors, once more in their blue jackets and easy dress, seemed half inclined to cheer me as my curly pate rose above the companion hatch; and Mr. Tiller, who had been assiduous in his attention, bobbing in and out of my berth all the day, gave me a squeeze of his paw which set my fingers tingling with pain. When night fell, the *Merlin*, in smoother water kept close in shore with a fine favouring breeze. I was fast asleep—too tired for dreams.

Heavens! what is that? The cutter has gone on a rock and we are lost! I was out of my berth and on deck in an instant. The first glance told me that the *Merlin*, under a mighty spread of canvas, was tearing through the sea far from shore. Some unusual event was taking place which had summoned all the crew forward except Mr. Tiller and the man who was steering.

Jack, glass in hand, was looking out by the side of the old quartermaster, who had screwed his eye into the end of the large telescope, and was on one knee peering into darkness. The men of the watch were all looking in the same direction. There was a strange sulphurous smell hanging about the deck, and two of the sailors were training one of the guns on our broadside up to the port again.

Mr. Tiller was rubbing his hands in great delight. "There'll be luck, after all, if we lay hold of her full of brandy and baccy, and maybe silk. I do think you may have brought us in fortune's way after all. Steady, Perks, steady; I'd give her something solid this time, to make her see we'll stand no nonsense."

It was the report and concussion of the gun fired with a blank charge over my head, which had roused me from my slumbers.

As Mr. Tiller spoke, a blinding flash lighted up the deck for a moment, and the carronade hopped in its carriage as it delivered the second angry message of the *Merlin* into darkness.

"Carrying on still, sir," cried a voice from the crosstrees, where one of the men was stationed, "and running up her gaff-topsail."

"By Jove, then, we must talk to her in earnest. Grimston, clear away the bow-gun, and give her a shot pretty close to her bows."

By dint of hard looking and the guidance of many fingers I could make out a schooner, which seemed to me somewhat larger than the *Merlin*, running on the same course as ourselves, but well to windward.

"I can't see any one on her decks," whispered Window, "except that fellow beside the steersman ; but I dare say there's a pretty nest of vagabonds on board, for all that. She's drawing on us, by Jove ; has her sails flat as boards. Now to stop her capers. Are you ready there, Grimston ?"

"Ay, ay, sir ; all right here. We want to fall away a point, if you please, sir, to shave her nicely."

And as the *Merlin* fell off I saw old Grimston take another look along his sights. The lanyard was pulled. Again the flash lighted up the eager faces—the *Merlin* quivered from the shock, and ere the crashing roar of the eighteen-pounder had well smitten our ears, the rush of the shot through the air boomed in a long hollow sound, tapering as it wore away till it was lost.

"Well done, Grimston ! Well done indeed ! Not twenty yards in front of her cutwater, I should think, at the second ricochet," shouted Window. "Hang me if the fellow minds us a bit. Phew — this smoke ! Aloft there. What's the schooner at ?"

"Running up her fore and aft staysail, and keeping on the same course, sir."

"We've lost by this trifling. This time we'll show you we're in earnest, my man. Let her have it right across the beam, and if a spar goes she's only herself to blame."

Again the long gun spoke out. In a few seconds a suppressed exclamation from the men told the ball had missed its mark. The schooner still held on, and under her additional canvas was flying fast ahead, whilst the *Merlin* had lost way in yawing to train her gun.

"I don't think she can stand a stitch more canvas, sir," said Mr. Tiller, "if we were to carry all away. The wind is rising again as it is."

"Try her again, Grimston. I'll lay the gun myself." Window, full of the excitement, proceeded to cover the imperturbable schooner, now pronounced without doubt to be the *Sarah Sykes*, of Baltimore, U.S. Just as the lanyard was pulled the cutter gave a quick lurch ; the shot striking far short of the schooner, threw up a pillar of spray and was lost from sight.

"She's gaining on us fast. I would sink her if I could, for there's no chance of coming up with her ;" and Lieutenant Jack this time spoke with clenched teeth, and uttered something very

like a strong obliurgation. "Now then, Mr. Grimston, do your best this time. Plump it right into her."

Whether the distance deceived the old gunner or not, the shot again fell short. Window now directed the elevation of the gun and revised the aim. As the *Merlin* steadied herself for a moment, he gave the word "Fire." Once more the shot struck short between us and the schooner, and flew astern of her, as I could see through the telescope by the white splashes in the water.

The schooner careening over to the increasing breeze calmly took in her staysail, as if to mock our efforts. It was evident the *Merlin* was letting her slip out of her claws by firing at such long bowls. The chance of hitting her decreased—that of overtaking her would soon be gone altogether. Window determined to lay his course again, hoping that one of his colleagues might block the bold smuggler, and that the sound of the firing at sea would arouse the coast-guard to signal to the stations to be on the alert.

"She's making for the French coast, I think," said Mr. Tiller, "though, then, as I say to myself, if that's her game, why does she keep so much to the west'ard? Driscoll can't hope to run a cargo with us after him, and all the stations roused. Maybe it's her best point of sailing."

"Anyway, Tiller, it's too good for us," said Jack Window. "How she is walking along, to be sure!"

And so with much reluctance he was obliged to give up his hope of crippling the "enemy," as old Tiller called her. With very small chance of overtaking her, he resolved to pursue and keep the schooner in sight at all events. To me the whole scene was "great fun." It was full of excitement. I thought little of the horror which would have been worked had one of the missiles crashed into that solitary craft, smashing up wood and iron and the miserable wretches who were cowering behind the bulwarks, and yet held on their course. I could not see the pale resolute man, with compressed lips and frowning brow, who, grasping the tiller, was looking now aloft to the draw of his sails, and now to the dark side of the angry cutter, from which, as the flash came, he might expect that he and his venture were about to meet their fate.

Morning was breaking when I went up to have another look at the *Sarah Sykes*.

"Where is she now, Mr. Window?"

There was a look of undisguised vexation on his face as he pointed out a snow-white speck far away on the horizon, which the morning light threw in relief on the clouds and sea surge.

"Running away from us hand over hand ; and what's worse, my lad, she's making right down Channel as if going to run for Brest—maybe across the Bay of Biscay. She is keeping away now from the Irish coast, and will, if she lies on her course, run pretty close to the Land's End. I can't lose sight of her, for Mister Driscoll knows what he's about ; if he could dodge us he would very likely 'bout ship and make another run to land his cargo, knowing well the cutters are nearly all down about here. Confound you," continued he, shaking his fist, "I'll follow you till you're inside your bounds as long as I'm afloat. Well, it's a longer holiday then we reckoned on. There is every sign of another breeze of wind springing up, and if it's a rattler we may run down on him after all."

All day at sea—the centre of the shield on the outer rim of which, glinting like the wing of the mew, danced in the growing roll of the waves the object of our pursuit ! Ships came in sight and sank beneath the horizon here and there, but every eye was turned on that tiny speck. And as night set in, and the wind rose still higher, and the *Merlin* lay over under a press of canvas, which made every spar scream as if in suffering, whilst the foam bubbled along the top of her lee bulwarks, Jack Window, very anxious, and rather more stern and curt than I had seen him, held a council with his trusty aide, the result of which was that they would hold on in their pursuit, and that, if the *Sarah Sykes* got away, it should be no fault of his.

"If she was to lie-to now, I don't see what harm we could do her, supposing Driscoll has any papers at all. He might say he was going from Baltimore to Brest, and that he took a fancy to come round by the North Passage. As he's up to every trick on the cards, I can only suppose he has no papers to clear himself. He was certainly inside the line when we sighted him, and he refused to lie-to when fired at. No, depend on it, he is playing some deep and desperate game—something more than a mere affair of tobacco and brandy."

And so Jack sat over his rum and water ruminating, and looking at the glass from time to time, and cheering up as he saw it falling—for after a temporary rise the mercury began to go down again. He rubbed his hands now and then, and with an inquiring glance at Mr. Tiller, murmured, with an air of satisfaction, "We may catch him yet—we may catch him yet. I'll carry on till the sticks are in danger, I can tell you, Tiller."

And so he did. That night was terrible. Before it was over, the *Merlin* was plunging in a sea of which the roll was grander and deeper than that I had witnessed with so much awe. As the gale

grew in strength the cutter proved the correctness of the Lieutenant's prophecy, or at least of his hopes, and the distance between her and the schooner was obviously diminishing ; but the *Sarah Sykes* altered her course towards evening.

"I'm darned if she's not going back to Amerikey, as certain as I live," grunted the old sailor at the helm ; "we're going to have a spree in the Atlantic, young gentleman."

The Lieutenant's lips closed tighter than ever, and his brow darkened, as the sky, descending on the sea, poured forth its deluges of rain, and the wind tearing off the foaming summit of the billows blew them in flying scud over the boiling waters. Still, when the day was over, and the night came, the schooner was there. When the morning dawned she was still in her place. Men shook their heads. Mr. Tiller confessed to me, as we sat below, he would have been glad if she disappeared. "As long as she kept on her present course, the *Merlin*," he said, "had no chance ; and if the wind went down again the schooner would just slip away again like a greyhound. Supposing the *Merlin* should come up with her in such a seaway, no boat could board her ; and I don't suppose Mr. Window would venture to sink her."

He was interrupted in his confidences by the appearance of Window's head in the cabin. "I say, Tiller," he exclaimed, "the fellow has, just out of sheer bravado, run up the Yankee flag in blue water. We can just make it out—stars and stripes, sure enough, as big as a mainsail ! But I'll make him show his papers, as I live."

"Yes, that's all very well, sir ; but have we the right ? We can't board him at sea, as we're only revenue, you know."

"There's the pendant flying," exclaimed Window, "and right or wrong, I'll call Mr. Driscoll to account."

But the passion and determination of man were rebuked by the voice of the storm. The gale increased to a hurricane. The sea, almost beaten down by the force of the wind, had a fearful strength. Again and again ponderous sheets of water rushed over the staggering vessel, and strove as though they would fain press her down for ever. With topmast struck, her trysail reefed to a shred, and a tiny staysail, she struggled on like some drowning bird. At last it became evident that it was madness to continue the contest with the Atlantic, and Window gave orders to lie to. For three long days and nights the *Merlin* rode in the midst of the tempest ; and there, some four or five miles away, rising and falling at long intervals in the tremendous seas, lay the schooner, oftentimes hidden from us by the scud and by the drift of the tor-

tured waters. All the time I, perforce, remained in my cabin and in the little saloon which had become all my world, lighted only by the lamp which burned night and day, with the hatches battened and the dead lights down. I could hear the seas sweeping over the deck, and the tread of the heavy boots above, and the thumping of coils of rope; the lamp swung backwards and forwards, clicking like the pendulum of a clock, for ever gathering a dank coat of salt dew, which crept down below and pervaded all things; the timbers creaked and cried aloud, and little streams of water trickling in and down over the paint, showed how the *Merlin* was tried in the fight with her enemy. I was beginning to consider an angle of forty-five up and down the normal condition of marine life; and our meals, such as they were, becoming worse every day, were eaten under circumstances of contrivance and dexterity almost incredible to the uninitiated. I knew we were in danger, though I could not tell what it was, for I saw Merry, our steward, crying and praying, and drinking a great deal of rum and water; and although the latter was natural enough, the former practices were not at all usual with him, as I had heard him more than once larding his speeches to little Dan, the captain's boy, with words which made my hair stand up. Window confessed it was the worst weather he had ever met in these parts—it was as bad as a hard cyclone, and nothing could stand it except such a boat as we were in, and that “confounded Yankee.”

“And where is she now, sir?”

“She is—will you believe it, Terry?—she is actually quite close to us. We have never lost sight of her all this time, night or day. There's not a soul to be seen except one man on deck, and she is lying-to as comfortable as a duck. You don't know what absurd fellows sailors are. I declare there are some old salts on board who, I'm told, have quite a fear on them about her, and think she is not canny. I expect next they will swear she is the *Flying Dutchman*. No,” he continued, “you must not go up yet: all hands are below whom we don't want. Stay here, my dear boy, and put your trust in Him who watches over the sea and land. You are a brave, stout heart, and, with God's blessing, we will live yet to talk over the time that Jack Window nearly went down with you in the mid-Atlantic in a mad chase after that craft of the evil one——”

“That the craft and subtlety of the devil be brought to nought, good Lord deliver us,” ejaculated a voice, with a hiccup, from the pantry. Window, who knew the source of the sound, clenched his fist and his teeth.

"You'll catch it for this, Mr. Merry, I can promise you."

"Catch it?—and don't you call this catching it? Oh! Mr. Window, hear me entreat you to give up drink and bad company! Give peace in our time, O Lord."—The prayer was interrupted by a cut over the shoulders with a strap, delivered by the Lieutenant with all his might, and Mr. Merry, who sat on the floor of his pantry, with a glass of grog in one hand, and with the leg of the table clutched in the other, then relapsed into a crying fit, and then prayed at intervals in a voice which became more inarticulate, till it graduated into snoring.

The gale moderated at the end of the third day. The schooner shook out her feathers. Once more the chase was resumed, but with no better fortune. Day after day passed, one like another: the thumping of the waters against the much-vexed sides of the cutter—the words of command—the rattling of halyards and sheets on the deck, mingling for ever with the moaning and whistling of the wind—all around us a tumultuous sea, above a leaden sky flecked with cloud-shapes, hurrying in a chase as futile as our own. There came into my head a hope that somehow or other we might get to India at last—for my geography was rather vague, and was perverted by sentiment. But all such happy delusions were knocked on the head by old Jack, whom I began to tell all my thoughts to without reserve. The *Merlin* was fast approaching the shores of the New World.

"We are on the Banks and rather astonishing the cod-fishers, I can tell you, Terry. I fear I shall be beaten after all, be laughed at, and, what is worse, be reprimanded for leaving my station."

There, far as the eye could reach, were ships of all sizes and rigs lying at anchor in deep water, tossing and pitching in the roll of the sea; and as we passed close by a brig which was tumbling about in an agonizing manner, I could see the fishing-lines over her sides, and the men pulling up the cod-fish hand over hand from the depths below. Ahead of us ever was the schooner, flying through the maze of ships. The lights on board the fleet at night looked like lurid stars through the sea-haze.

"It is all over," said Jack to me, as I put my head out of my crib to inquire after the morning's news. "She is beating us fast, and land is in sight."

"Land!—what land?"

"Why the land of the New World, somewhere about Cape Cod, I guess, as the natives would say. There was just a chance that some of our cruisers from Halifax might be knocking about to look at the fishermen, or buzznacking for something or other, which might have helped me to lay hold of that slippery fellow. But no

such luck. It's merely that I like to stick to my word I am carrying on still ; and soon we'll have to 'bout ship and make straight back across the Atlantic for Dr. Ball, T.C.D., and his young friends. You'll be able to spin many a tremendous yarn, won't you, Terry, about our cruise ? I only hope the Doctor and your grandfather won't prosecute me for running away with you."

It was as Lieutenant Window said : the cloud I could just discern resting on the sea in the early morning, became more distinct and rose higher every hour, and spread away right and left ; and fishermen, and coasting vessels with snowy sails, and all the signs of prosperous, busy maritime life, grew upon us ; and at last we could see the villages, the white houses, and the churches on the land.

"The schooner is lying-to, sir," cried the look-out man ; and there, sure enough, was the *Sarah Sykes* slowly coming round with her broadside to us. In another moment a puff of smoke rose from her side, and as it cleared away, we could see an enormous ensign at her peak—the stars and stripes, flying over a green flag. She was making signals to a sloop-of-war which lay in shore, and presently the latter filled her topsails and came down towards the smuggler.

Jack and Mr. Tiller were watching these proceedings through their glasses with an air of intense dissatisfaction. "I only want to give him a bit of my mind, but he will have the best of me ; and he's signalling to that swaggering Yankee to come and help him to bully us. I swear I shouldn't be at all surprised if the fellow pretends to have grounds of complaint against us. It is enough to make a man mad, to be led such a wild-goose chase—to be laughed at on this side of the Atlantic—to be near foundering with all on board in the middle of it, and to be certain of coming to grief when I get to the Old World. However, there's no help for it. Mr. Tiller, I shall put about now, for I am not in a humour to stand any of their chaff, and perhaps something worse. No ! no !—haul down !" he exclaimed, angrily, as the Union Jack was running up ; "haul down at once."

By this time the sloop-of-war and the schooner had come within a mile of each other, and as the *Merlin* put her bow eastward, we could see a boat push off from the latter and make the best of her way towards the man-of-war. The wind had fallen light in shore, while there was still a fair leading breeze outside, and the cutter, on her best point of sailing, went buzzing through the water at the rate of twelve knots an hour.

"It's no use, my friend ! It is our turn now !" quoth Jack Window, with a little touch of his old smile on his face, as he

stood looking over the taffrail, with his glass to his eye. "If you want to catch us you must send the schooner after us, and I only wish you would dare, that's all ; I'd give a year's pay to see it." And in effect the sloop, with all sail set, and a number of signals to which she called attention by gun after gun, seemed to be anxious to overtake the *Merlin*. But she did not ; and as the moon rose in the first cloudless sky we had seen for many a night, the man-of-war was hull down, and in the morning was gone altogether.

Sixteen long days and nights at sea ! How I began to hate the biscuit and the salt pork, and beef and beans, and brown-black coffee, although whales, and porpoises, and albecores, and gannets—nay, a devil-fish and a veritable shark—came to diversify the voyage. The strain and the excitement were all gone. Jack Window was busy with logs, and journals, and writing reports—the latter were never-ending, still beginning, and mostly went fluttering away in fragments over the side.

"I would sooner write a despatch about a general action," he groaned. "Oh ! how they will pitch into me !" And I sat and looked at him and sighed to think that I could not help him. There was but a limited library on board—the "Nautical Almanac," "Navy Lists," "Coast-guard Regulations," "Orders in Council," "Norie's Navigation," a collection of Board of Trade and Custom-House circulars and memoranda, "The Life of Nelson," "The British Worthies"—an odd volume of "Hakluyt," which was my mainstay. But before the voyage was half done I had finished "Hakluyt," and the "Worthies," and "Nelson," and had ventured on "Norie" and Navy Lists. Sometimes it occurred to me that Dr. Ball would be rather angry, and that my grandfather would be fretting for my absence, and perhaps uneasy ; but I never supposed that there were any downright fears for our safety. It was nearly a month since I set out on my eventful voyage. I could not then—for I had never felt it—imagine how watching and waiting fill the soul with gloom and bury hope at last.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURN.

"WE are all so glad to welcome you, old fellow—not a soul ever expected to see one of you alive again. Why, it's famous !" And Captain Buddicombe, who stood on our deck as

the *Merlin* brought-to under the guard-ship, off Spike Island, in Cove Harbour, shook his old shipmate by the hand again and again.

"Lost ! why, what else could we think, my dear Window ? It is now the 4th of May. You were last seen off Ballycotton on the evening of the 5th of April. There was one of the worst gales we have had on the coast for years. The Cove, and Youghal, and Kinsale men tell us they never knew a heavier sea on. A vessel dismasted, which looked like the cutter, was seen to go down in the height of it off the Seven Heads. Next day, a larger craft, which had been seen in her company, came ashore at Horse Island, and was of course broken up into firewood ; but it was evident she was American-built. She was laden with rum, brandy, tobacco, and French silk ; a piece of her stern-board, with the letters '*a,h, S,y,k,*' in gold, was washed ashore, and a part of a boat, with the letters and words '*altimore, U.S.,*' on it. The bodies that were found could not be identified, but Rattray says, from their clothing and marks, they were mostly Frenchmen and foreigners. It was known you were chasing the *Sarah Sykes*, and putting one thing and the other together—although there was great faith in the sea-going qualities of the cutter—when days lengthened into weeks, and still there was no sign of you, the most hopeful agreed there could be only one conclusion. All the papers have been full of the '*Loss of her Majesty's cutter Merlin, J. Window, Lieutenant R.N., commanding, and all hands.*' We welcome you as one who has come back from the grave."

Jack Window, with his eyes wide open, listened to the captain, and when he had done, putting the paper on his knees, he gave a very gentle and very long whistle.

" '*A,h,*' that's the end of '*Sarah,*' " quoth he ; " and '*S,y,k,*' that's the beginning of '*Sykes,*' on her stern ! '*a, l, t, i, m, o, r, e, U.S.,*' which only wants a '*B*' to be '*Baltimore,*' on her boat ! Then, in the name of all that's wonderful, what have I been running after ? " He continued as if reading from a list :

" A schooner about two hundred and eighty tons, long and low in the water, with tall, raking masts, gilt figure-head a woman's face, fine bow and run, square stern, overhanging counter, coppered to the bends." " If ever a craft answered in all particulars to description, that Yankee I've been making a fool of myself after, is the *Sarah Sykes*, of Baltimore ! " " Michael Driscoll, a deserter from the Royal Navy, native of Kinsale, and now citizen of the United States, master, sailing generally with clearances from Boston for Havre." Well, I know nothing about the last part, for they would not let me near enough to see them. Hum ! and so

you all thought we were lost. Here we have it," and Jack Window began to read a newspaper where Captain Buddicombe's finger was resting. "'Loss of his Majesty's cutter *Merlin*, and all souls;' that's good to begin with. 'Regret to say—hum!—further accounts—hum!—confirm painful—hum!—total loss. Fine vessel—hum!—deserving, but over-zealous officer.' *Over-zealous!*—what's that? 'Crew, forty-five souls; widows, children—lament—hum——'" his face assumed an expression of pain; he read on silently—clasped his hands—let the paper fall at his feet—and looking at me with eyes slowly filling with tears, took me by the hand, and said—"Terry, my dear fellow, I have news for you. Come down with me to the cabin. Buddicombe, I'm sure you will excuse me for a few minutes; this is the boy who is mentioned—from Dr. Ball's—in the paper, whose grandfather you know—Dr. Brady. All right, God bless you. Come, Terry—come along. We have all our trials, and mine and yours began early."

There was something in his words and manner which made me anxious. I asked, "Is there anything about grandpapa in the papers? Is he quite well?"

"Quite well, Terry—quite well; better than he has been for many a day." Jack Window was a bad dissembler; I heard him cough in an odd kind of way; the tears were stealing down his cheeks. "Don't ask me yet. We must see if it's true, my lad. Why here have they been quite sure that we have been all at the bottom of the sea for the last four weeks, and not a hair hurt in the whole crew! Come what will, I must get leave, and we will go up to-night together by the Cork mail."

"But what is it that is not true? If grandfather is well, that is all right; what does the paper say, Captain Jack?"

"I will tell you by-and-by, Terry. You must not believe a word of their confounded story." I felt more uneasy than before. He continued—"You see the papers gave out that we were lost. Dr. Ball wrote to your grandfather to say you had been allowed to go with me on this unlucky cruise; and your grandfather, they go on to say, began to get frightened like the rest at the ridiculous story in the papers. Well, he comes to Dublin to see Dr. Ball, and then he goes to the coastguard stations, and worries himself. What is the use of all this talk, my dear boy? Here we are, within a few hours of Dublin. The boy is packing up your clothes. I have sent to engage places, and to-morrow I will restore you to the Doctor, and bear my punishment meekly."

"But what does the paper say about grandpapa? Why should anything be said of him? It makes me so miserable. Do tell me, because I must know."

Jack Window looked at me straight from his great eyes, and there was a tenderness in his tone as he spoke which sunk into my heart. "What is said is that your grandfather, Terry, has been very ill. With us it would matter little whether an old country doctor was ill or well ; but it's something to belong to what they call the 'old stock' here ; and there are notices of your family as long as my arm, my dear boy, all turning on the supposed fact that you have gone down, in the thirteenth year of your age, in the ill-fated *Merlin*. They rake up all the old bones they can find of Generals, Barons, and Counts Brady and O'Brady. And, finally, they give the old gentleman a stroke of apoplexy in order to finish off their article. You may be sure it's not true. But remember, Terry, that come what may, you must look on me as your friend. I have little kith and less kin, and no friends but myself, and you are a mere boy, on the very outside of the race of life in which you see me winded and beaten ; but it is something, nay, a great thing, to have a friend ; and when you are a lion, if ever you get into a net, call on Jack Window, and you may reckon on teeth, and perseverance in the use of them."

It is one of the many happinesses of youth that its sorrow is not deep or lasting. It is passionate—fervent, whilst it endures ; but the sun soon breaks through the clouds. It must be of youth that it is said "Sorrow endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." So of the anticipations of grief, which make the bulk of the wisdom of old age ; there is in youth but a slight leaven—too little, thank Heaven, to leaven the lump. As I rattled away in the inside of the mail with Jack Window, who was full of documents and troubles, I had almost forgotten all my fears and grief, and had brought myself to believe with him that all these rumours of evil were as baseless as my night-dreams.

It was near nine o'clock next day before Jack and I, on an outside car, were on our way to the suburb of Dublin in which Dr. Ball's establishment was situated. Jack Window was very grave then. I had seen him speaking to a man in the Post-office yard, and noted that his face fell as he spoke ; but as he got up beside me he took my hand, and said, "We're in time, my boy. Please God, all will be right yet." When we arrived at the old house Dr. Ball was standing at the door to welcome me, and the windows were filled with faces, for the news of our safety and of our coming had gone through the school. There was less stateliness and more kindness in the Doctor's manner than usual. He held out both hands to welcome me.

"Ah, Mr. Window, what a time we have had of it ! We will hear the story of our young Ulysses presently, when he has seen his grandfather."

“My grandfather here !” I exclaimed. “Oh, where is he ? Let me go to him at once.”

A quick glance passed between the Doctor and Window, and I heard the latter whisper, “I have not told him all about that.”

“The fact is then, Brady,” continued Dr. Ball, turning to me and dusting some snuff off his shirt-frill, “the fact is your respected grandfather has been and is ill—so ill that the physicians order the greatest quiet and calm to be observed. Nothing must be allowed to agitate him ; and we must break the news of your arrival here very gently, in the course of the day. He has been in some degree prepared for good news—not without hesitation among the medical attendants—by being told some doubts are entertained if the vessel seen to go down was the *Merlin*. Nothing can exceed the kindness of Sir Richard’s household. If she had been his daughter, Miss Butler could not be a better nurse—so tender, so thoughtful for her years. You must be patient, my young friend ; to-day is almost the crisis of his illness.”

By degrees I heard the whole story.

Dr. Ball wrote to Lough-na-Carra to say he had given me leave to take a sail along the coast for a couple of days, with a naval officer who had known my father out in India, and that he greatly feared some accident had occurred, as more than a fortnight had elapsed and nothing had been heard of the cutter ; that there had been dreadful storms at sea soon after she was seen off Wicklow Head, and that there were reports of a wreck on the south coast. My grandfather posted up to town immediately. Then he went along the coast, travelling from one station to another, making inquiries and sifting the stories of the men and of the country people, till he came to the scene of the wreck, and to the place from which the *Merlin* was seen to founder. He had overtaxed his powers, journeying without intermission, walking among the cliffs. As he gazed on the sullen ocean beneath which his loved boy was sleeping for ever, the spark of hope dwindled and expired—nature gave way. The sailors who accompanied him to the spot had gone a little way off, for they heard his smothered sobs. When they turned, after a time, he was not in sight. They were horrified to find he had fallen over the cliff and was lying on the beach below, insensible, his white hair soaked in blood. For days he lay between life and death ; but he was strong of frame ; his natural vigour of constitution came to his aid, his broken arm knitted well, and he slowly recovered the power of utterance. His sole wish was to be brought back to Lough-na-Carra. They heard him in his sleep speaking of some wicked woman who should never touch a farthing of the money ; and tossing in troubled dreams, he

cried for mercy for his grandson. They carried him on a litter to the beach, and he bore the passage round to Dublin, buoyed up by the desire to return to his home. Sir Richard Desmond insisted on taking the old man to his house in Merrion-square till he could continue his journey to Lough-na-Carra; and although he in the utmost grief told all his friends he did not care to live, he vowed at the same time he must get to his house ere he died. Two days before the *Merlin* appeared in Cove, as he was seated in his easy chair, his eye rested on a paragraph in the paper. He uttered a feeble exclamation: "My God! she comes again!" and tried to rise. His servant ran to his assistance, but the old man was speechless and powerless. What it was he had seen to affect him so powerfully no one could say; but his hand clutched the newspaper firmly, and he resisted all attempts to remove it from his feeble grasp.

This was what I heard with grief—not "too deep for tears." In my inner heart I blamed myself for being the cause of all the suffering which he had undergone.

I went over to Merrion-square with Jack Window at once, for the honest fellow had come back to bid me good-bye ere he returned to his ship. There was, as he expected, what he called "no end of a row. Most likely he would be keel-hauled by the bigwigs; but it would be just as well, for he had only taken coastguard-service for want of something better; and he didn't much care."

"I will fix myself somewhere near you, Terry, when the old man gets well, and you get your vacation-time—somewhere near a trout-stream, and within sight of the sea; and, meantime, let me hear from you regularly, and I'll tell you how everything goes on. We will remain friends, won't we, Terry, though I've caused so much trouble?" A silent grasp of the hand was my answer.

We had just turned into the square, near the corner of which Sir Richard's house was, and Maurice Prendergast was coming down the steps. He had sat with me, listening to my adventures, in my room, and had thrown his arms round my neck and embraced me the moment he saw me; but he had never said a word of visiting Sir Richard Desmond; and now his face reddened, and he stammered and looked down when I exclaimed, "And so you were calling to see how grandpapa was! It is very kind of you, Maurice; I hope you have a good report."

"I was at Sir Richard's on business," he replied; "that is, I had to try to see him or Miss Desmond about a little matter my sister asked me to get done—something for her school. I couldn't

see them, for they both left town this morning ; and Miss Butler's gone, too. Dr. Brady is better, but still very bad."

"Will you wait, and we'll walk back together?"

"No, thank you ; I have somewhere else to go to, and the Doctor has only given me leave for two hours ;" and he walked away, with his quick step, and his hands in his pockets—there was likely to be little else in them—and his head down, as was his wont. And Jack Window stood looking after him, and walked up and down, as I made my inquiries. Vincent, the old porter, though he rarely visited the castle, knew me well enough, and waddling back to the fire in the hall, which was lighted in spite of its being a fine day in May, patted the coals, wheezing out his news.

"And that's how it is, Master Brady—'percarious state,' was Sir Philip's words, 'but on the whole a shade of improvement,' says he. Sir Henry was for it that he was a power better, and Graves was for that, too ; and they'd a great deal of learned talk just at the foot of the stairs there. But I'd back Sir Philip agin all of them. Anyway, the house is just like Madame Stephens', or Mercer's, with the doctors coming and going in their shoots of black, and their big gold watch chains, and their shining boots that makes no noise. But who'd grudge it if they'd get the darlint odd man all right again?"

"And Sir Richard and the family are gone, Vincent?"

"Oh, ay ; one of their sudden moves. Not a word of it did Mounseer Pitty know last night ; and Sir Richard had him up at cockcrow, and orders him to pack and be off—and little pity I have for the same conceited Frinchman. Mamselle, I hear, is goin' to give notice—her health can't stand these tremenjous stravagins. Poor Miss Desmond and the young missus had to be nimble, I can tell you. They've left Mrs. Whipple, the housekeeper, in charge, and she's in the ould gentleman's room this minit."

"Well, say I'll be back again this evening before dusk, and Dr. Ball will let me come whenever I like."

"I heard them saying you was to stop here as soon as your grand-dadda was better. It was Miss Mary put that in their heads, I know ; but Sir Richard went off so smart he'd no time to think of it."

As I was walking back towards the house with Jack Window, who seemed as anxious as I was about a man he had never seen, I gave him all the particulars.

"Who was the lad you met just now, Terry," he continued, "as we were outside the steps?"

"A schoolfellow, Maurice Prendergast, son of a country gentleman near Lough-na-Carra."

"I don't know why, Terry, exactly, but somehow I doubt if he's a good fellow. I don't like to see a young chap like that so thoughtful and cautious-like. He's a handsome lad; but there's mischief in those deep-seated black eyes and those thin lips. I'm not more of a judge of men's phizzes than other people who go about the world on their own hook early in life, but I think his figure-head means danger. I must bid you good-bye. Our little excursion, which began so quietly, has grown into a great event; I hope it will have no results which will ever cause you to regret our fishing acquaintance. As a last word, I can only say I shall always look out for your future with interest, and hope to see you making a name for yourself. Don't," he said, after a moment's pause, "mind what I said about your schoolfellow, Prendergast. It's just as likely I'm wrong as right. Suspicion and distrust will come soon enough." Another shake of the hand and he was off; but it was only to turn round and impress on me to write, and not mind postage, and let him know how Dr. Brady got on. "I'll send you my address as soon as I know what they are going to do with me. Good-bye, Terence—God bless you; and remember you will ever have a sure, if feeble, friend in Jack Window."

The turn of the street hid his figure, as, with a light jerky step, he walked briskly away.

A few days had made a great change in my reflections. Care had come indeed. There was now a real potent cause of solicitude, which I felt was little akin to that fantastic uneasiness which had so long possessed my spirit. The good old man who loved me so, and who had watched over me with such tenderness! I might never see him more. I did not ask what would become of me; but I was full of remorse at the idea that I had been, however innocently, the cause of his illness. My life was about to bear the mark which even youth must feel. Morning and evening I went over regularly for more days than I can remember. I heard the report of the doctors from Vincent or the servant, and sometimes from Mrs. Whipple herself, whose silk dress and white cap and collar were as angular and hard as the good creature herself was round and soft. He was slowly—very slowly—recovering from the sleep so little separated from death—his consciousness returning, too—Mrs. Whipple thought if his mind could only be kept quiet he would soon get right. But he was for ever distracting himself about all sorts of people. Mrs. Whipple opined they were creations of his brain: some woman, he thought, was coming to disturb him—to take his son from him, or his grandson—to come to Lough-na-Carra and destroy every one—a sort of witch she must be; and then he raved so, poor gentleman, it quite put him back again.

One day Vincent, as he opened the door, had a pleasant look, which almost prepared me for good news. "Sir Philip and all of them is agreed the squire, your grand-dadda, is a deal better this morning. Faith, it was wantin' to get up and go down to the country he was, poor gentleman, by the night mail. And Sir Philip says he'll be able to judge this evening if it's right to give him another dose of the same medicine. They're jist giving it to him, by dhrops—in hints and scraps—at a time, and it's all about yourself, and that there are chances of your not being lost after all; they're coming on to the news by degrees, that you're alive and well—and faith, if he could see you this minute, Master Terence, I think it would do him all the good in the world, for it's well you look, and alive you are, and no mistake about it."

The first sick room makes a deep dent in the memory: the phials on the mantelpiece, the glasses and bottles on the table, the imperfect light, the constrained movements, the quiet noises which dominate the silence. I can see my grandfather now as when my eyes rested on him through the opening door—seated in an easy chair in his well-known old dressing-gown of faded blue velvet, with its tarnished silver cord; his white hair escaping from beneath a skull-cap, and one foot resting on a cushion; his cheek flushed and thin, his look excited and eager.

"And they actually said he would be here to-night, Whipple?—the darling boy. Thank God—thank Him for that great mercy." He was silent, and one hand sought its fellow and pressed the fingers as his face was turned towards heaven.

"Yes, indeed they did, Doctor. And Sir Philip said to me—'If he arrives to-night, and the squire is not asleep, you may let the young gentleman just come in to say good night, and go away again. But tell my old friend,' said Sir Philip, 'I'll be very angry if he keeps him longer than that. It will do neither of them any good.'"

"What time did they say he would be here? If he comes by the day coach he is very nearly here now"—he examined an old gold watch on the table by his side. "Ah! it will make me quite myself the moment he comes." I heard his anxious inquiries—I could see his face—whilst Mrs. Whipple half turning to the door as if listening, with her finger raised to impress on me the necessity of caution, controlled the situation.

Not long after that I was seated at his feet, with my head on his knee, and his arms round my neck. Alas! one poor hand was gathered up and cold, the fingers bent and stiff, the arm numbed and scarce capable of motion; his figure was inclined and contracted at one side, his face rigid, and the mouth curved down-

wards—he spoke with difficulty ; but for me it was enough to be there—to see him—to return the pressure of his hand, to listen to the broken accents in which he spoke so fondly.

The summer holidays were so near at hand by the time the doctors considered my grandfather was sufficiently recovered for the journey to Lough-na-Carra, it was proposed to let me go back with him. Was there ever a schoolboy who objected to a longer holiday than he expected ?

“ Dr. Ball sees not the least reason why he should not go ; and,” added Sir Philip, “ he seems to be of more service to you than any of us.”

Every day, indeed, I had my visit to the familiar room, and at last the old man was well enough to get downstairs with a little help, and then, by degrees, he ventured on walking in the Square, leaning on my arm—walking feebly with a painful effort. A great change had taken place in him. We had become more than friends. Ever since the eventful cruise he seemed uneasy if I were away from his side ; and a few minutes’ delay in my arrival put him, as Mrs. Whipple said, “ quite in a fluster.” We were never so happy as when he was sitting in his easy chair, whilst I was crouched on a stool at his feet reading some of my books, conscious that his eyes were resting on me, and feeling his hand on my shoulder.

The day of our return to Lough-na-Carra is another of my memories. We posted down from Dublin ; and as the postboy led out the horses for the last stage, taking off his cawbeen to my grandfather, he exclaimed, “ Long life to yer honour and to the young masther ! They’re all expectin’ you in the town, so they are. God knows the poor has missed yer honour badly !”

And as we drew up to the “ Desmond Arms,” there, sure enough, were all the old people and the young assembled in the street, and the bells of the church were ringing, and the rector, and the priest, and the curates were ready to welcome the Doctor, and burst into a cheer as they saw his face in the carriage ! But when he got down and limped towards the Lough-na-Carra carriage through the little crowd, silence came upon them, mingled with that smart clack of the tongue and short sucking of the breath which the Irish use to express pity and surprise. He was altered indeed ! These little marks of sympathy and regard were too much for his enfeebled nerves ; and as his hand was shaken by his neighbours and dependants, I felt his useless arm quiver on mine, and saw the tears stealing down his face.

“ I thank you all, boys and girls, and you, my kind, good friends. You see I have brought him home with me ; and there will be

some fun in Lough-na-Carra perhaps again when I'm a little stronger."

Amid the "Amens" of the people the old mare, roused to unusual vivacity even for her by the cuts of the whip which old Dan gave unconsciously in his excitement, started off down the main street, and we sat together on one side whilst Dan directed his course amid pigs and children to the old lodge, and whirled up to the hall door, where all the servants were gathered on the steps to greet their master.

I could not help feeling as if I were to blame, and the secret compunction I experienced was sharpened by the reproachful expression which I fancied I could detect in the looks of the neighbours.

CHAPTER IX.

TRUTH AT LAST.

FOR a time it seemed as if the Doctor would recover his health, but the tokens of returning strength passed away, leaving him but a weak, uncomplaining invalid. His face was restored to its usual outline; he could walk, and use his arm, but his gait was feeble and uncertain, and there was a vacant, dreamy sadness in his look and expression. I observed the servants were infected by this melancholy. Sometimes after the post came in my grandfather would appear more depressed than ever, and would stay in his room rummaging papers and writing. Strange visitors came to the house, and saw him privately and went away. The family lawyer, Mr. Bates, stopped with us for several days, and had long interviews with the attorney of Kilmoyle and the land agent. The air was full of mystery and some gloomy influence which settled on us all; and oftentimes I could catch my grandfather's eye resting on me with such solicitude and compassion, that I was alarmed by the fears of an indefinite calamity impending over me, which were all the greater because of their vagueness. I used to steal away to my little room and wonder what it all meant, and look at the copy of my mother's picture over my bed, and then, under the ever-present sentiment which governed so much of my life, creep gently down to the great gaunt room, and gaze on the original of the portrait of her whom, without seeing or knowing, I so dearly loved.

It was one summer's afternoon, and my grandfather sat after dinner with Mr. Bates—I had come in from a ramble along the

banks of the river, and was passing through the hall—when I heard Mr. Bates say, “I would tell him all about it at once. He is old enough to know the truth. Call him in, sir, and tell him. If you like, I will go out and leave you.” I stood at the door, my heart beating violently, my lips open, my breast heaving.

My grandfather’s voice was agitated and low.

“Yes, Bates ; he should know all before I go. But why so soon ? Why cloud his years so early ? Poor boy, he has trouble enough before him.”

I entered the room and said, with as much calmness as I could command, “Indeed, grandfather, I could better bear anything than to see you ill, and to suffer as I do from all kinds of fears. Try me, and you will see how I will bear it. I am strong and well ; and if there is anything to tell, I feel it would do me good to know it now.”

My grandfather’s face had a puzzled, undecided expression. Mr. Bates sat, with his wine-glass to his eye, looking at the sunset through the mellow purple of the claret which half filled it.

“No doubt about it, my old friend ; Terence is now going on for fourteen years of age—strong, and tall of his years too. It will all come out sooner or later ; and the boy has his own suspicions all is not right as it is.”

“Well ! well !” sighed the old man ; “Terry, go into my study and bring out my desk.”

The old brass-bound rosewood desk, over which he sat so often, was before him in a moment. My grandfather selected the key from the bunch that hung from a black silk riband in his fob, opened the desk, raised the lid, and then, touching a spring which revealed a secret compartment, took out a bundle of letters. His hand shook, and a strange frown came to his brow, as he picked from the middle of the bundle a packet wrapped in oil-skin, which he slowly uncovered and examined, as though to make sure he was right. The contents were two letters, discoloured and yellow, on which the black wax of the broken seals was yet visible in patches ; and I felt at once these letters were to me the solution of the mystery which had troubled me so long. He held out one of the two.

“Before I give you this letter to read, I have a few words to say. No, Bates—stay, if you please ; you know all, and the poor boy will want your advice when I am no more. I would rather you stayed, indeed. Take this letter, Terry, and see if you can read the writing on the outside.”

I took the letter in my hand, and saw, in a small clear angular hand—“Dr. Brady, Bradystown House, Lough-na-Carra, Kilmoyle,

Ireland." In the corner was written "M. B." On the top—"To be delivered, on arrival, by Mohun." I read the address, and the Doctor resumed—

"That letter is from your mother, my child, the widow of my son, your brave and unhappy father. You have heard how he died in India, when you were very young; and you have heard, too, that your mother was drowned on the coast of Ceylon, when the ship in which she was coming to Europe after her husband's death, struck on a reef of rocks. I must go back a little. Your father was my only son. I had looked forward to the day when he might take my place in this old house here, marry one of his own people, and pass away in the arms of his children, long after my bones had been laid with those of our luckless race. Now I sit here, a poor, broken, desolate old man, with only you to comfort me, and all the hopes of my life lying in his distant grave. He went to India with his regiment after the usual routine of home service, and in the war which we were carrying on there he distinguished himself, so that he got his captain's commission for service in the field; and everything went so well with him I began really to think—as you may remember, Bates—that there was some gleam of good fortune in store for us, and the thought set me working all the harder to clear Lough-na-Carra for him, and to get the property out of the difficulties which seem entailed on the land. I needn't trouble you with that yet, Terry. From all sides I heard good accounts of my poor boy—how gallant he was, how gentle and good, how simple and how noble. Every one spoke well of him, and my heart was filled with thankfulness to the Almighty who had so blessed me with a son. Every letter that I got went to the Castle, where the eyes of Mary Desmond grew brighter as they rested on the lines—every paper in which his name appeared, and every account I heard of him, found its way to the Castle; for although the Desmonds are great people now compared to us, it was understood that there would be no objection to your father's marrying the lovely girl whom we all believed he loved with an affection equal to her own. Her father would not hear of a regular engagement, nor would he let them correspond; but he always said he would make no objection to the match. His son, the great Indian civilian, wrote home to say there was not a finer fellow in the service than Jack Brady, and that he heartily approved of the match of which he had heard. All this time there was no promise on either side, but there was an understanding which we all looked on as certain. Where could he meet a girl so good, so beautiful, so suited to him in every way as she who remained at her father's in this dull old

place, instead of going to balls and parties and enjoying herself, and gracing the society of which she would have been the highest charm, all on account of him? I was quite happy then; and even Dick Butler's importunity, and his avowed determination to marry his cousin Mary, and his reckless bets and restless manœuvres did not cause me a moment's thought. Oh! how I counted the days for his return. His time for leave would soon be up. One day—one day—it was little more than two years before you were born, Terry—a letter came to me in that well-known hand. It contained news which pained and surprised me. Not a word had come to prepare us for the news that your father was going to be married, and here was a letter under his own hand to say that he had met a young lady at a ball at Cawnpore a short time previously, and that he was happy to say they were just going to start for the hills to spend the honeymoon—words could not do justice to her exquisite beauty—she was the loveliest being in India, and he was looked on as the luckiest fellow in the service; true she had no money, but her father was an old officer of long standing; and then he went on to describe his happiness, and the charms of this child of sixteen, who was, he said, more like twenty years of age, as she had been born and educated in India. A paragraph in a newspaper confirmed this dreadful surprise. I could not go near the Castle—the thoughts of meeting Mary Desmond were too terrible. But the poor girl knew as well as I did when the Indian letters arrived at the village, and that evening, as I was thinking how I should break the news, the wheels of her little pony-carriage grated outside the hall door, and ere I could escape she was standing with a blush and a smile on that frank face, which reflected every feeling of a soul in which there was no guile or shadow of turning. Ah! Bates—the torture and shame of that moment. Her quick eye at once detected my agitation—one hand was pressed against her heart as she put her arm round my waist, and sinking her head on my shoulder, whispered—‘Is he ill? Tell me, or I shall die.’ Let me pass over that interview. She would not be refused. I was in such a state of uneasiness about her increasing agitation—unusual in one generally so calm and collected—that in very fear I broke the news to her by degrees, and she heard it all with her face buried on my breast, and her fair arms twined round me, with a sudden stillness which from the moment I commenced the story, was only broken by my voice and the labouring of her poor heart. When all was over, she asked me to let her see the letter. I handed it to her, and taking it from me she arose and walked with it to the window, as the light was failing. At the end my

poor son had written—‘Tell Miss Desmond of my happiness, and assure her how glad I shall be to hear that some fortunate fellow has secured her fair hand, though I do not think any man is good enough for her. I shall ever have the most affectionate regard for my old playfellow, to whom I hope some day to present my own sweet Mary.’ I could see she was deeply moved, and the letter, which was pressed in her fingers, fell to the ground. With averted face she held her hand to me, and said—‘Dear Doctor, it is late ; I must get back. Good night,’ as she passed out into the hall. In another moment I heard a heavy fall. She had fainted—my poor girl ! But why am I dwelling on these things ? She is among the angels in heaven, far from all care and sorrow. Dick Butler was as good a husband to her as it was in his nature to be ; but when she died, after little Mary’s birth, he went, as you and I know, Bates, to the deuce at the rate of a hunt. Presently I began to hear news from India I did not like at all. Your father had scarcely ever cost me a penny ; but now bills began to come in with excuses about the expenses of house-furnishing and housekeeping. He had to keep an establishment—his wife had been accustomed to live in great style, and all the rest of it. There were accounts of his splendid entertainments, and of his wife’s balls, and parties, and jewels—of her horses and plate—and poor Lough-na-Carra began to feel it ; and the bills became larger instead of smaller, and came oftener, until at last—my God !—I dreaded the mails. There was a change in his letters I did not like : he was either reckless or gloomy—he began to admit there were some little motes in his sunbeam—that she really was careless of money, and too fond of pleasure and admiration. ‘But,’ he added, ‘she is a mere child ; and really, if I could take her to England to-morrow I would put her to school, if I could, only for a certain event which is coming off, and which makes me a little anxious about her. These Indian-reared girls are spoiled by native nurses, and when a girl is so very remarkable as Mary for her loveliness, she is apt to get a liking for admiration, and to make a jealous, proud fellow like me rather unreasonable and sulky now and then.’ I see you growing pale, my dear Terry ; but it is best, as I have begun, that you should know all. Bates, give him a glass of wine ; it will do him good, and enable him to get through my story. Our correspondence became at last not what it ought to be between father and son. All my hopes and plans for the future—for his sake, mind—were shattered, and at last I was obliged to write out that I could stand his demands no longer—that I could afford still to let him have £300 a year, and the money for his majority, if he wanted the latter ; but

that would leave nothing for improvements, and but little for myself."

"Faith, and that's true," interrupted Mr. Bates; "and the captain ought to have known it well enough."

"Ah, well! Bates, we must not be too hard on him. Remember whom he had to deal with, and how completely he was her slave. I confess, when he wrote to ask me whether I could not manage to send him his allowance for ten years in a lump, as well as his majority—after I had paid very nearly £4,000 for him in the previous year or so—I lost my temper. I refused point blank; angry letters—some from him quite incoherent—passed, and at last a sullen silence, which was finally broken in tears by the news of his death." The old man paused, and after a moment went on, "You were born shortly before that. In those days letters took months to travel between here and India; and when I heard you were born my heart was softened, and our good friend there raised some money, and I sent it out to your father; but it arrived too late for any good purpose, and was spent as so much before it had been. The only comfort I had was, that just before the news of his death I received a few lines, in a broken, shaking hand, to make his peace; and I little imagined they were to be his last, and that they were written from his dying bed. In them he said, indeed, that he longed to get away home, and that his health had suffered a little; but he feared he could not arrange with the banks to leave India; 'and if,' added he, 'I should be carried off here, it is a consolation to think you will look after my widow and the dear little fellow. Mary will need some one with a very resolute temper to deal with her. She cannot understand we are not all as rich as some of her native nabobs and rajahs, or as some foolish young officers appear to be, because they run riot and get smashed in a few years; and it will do her good to see how English ladies bring up their families.' Ah, my boy, it is a sad story, and it grows sadder still." He paused again, and looked at Mr. Bates, who sat silent at the table, with one hand across his brow, in the gathering shades of the summer evening. "You perceive, Terry, I knew nothing of your mother—nothing except what the picture he sent us told; and when it came home with your father's it was easy to comprehend how such a face had led the dear fellow to forget everything else. Then came the intelligence of his death."

My grandfather ceased, and the tears trickled down his cheek beneath his thin hand. There was silence for a time, then he continued. "The last news I had was from your father's agent to say that he had secured a passage for your mother, and her infant

(yourself), and her servants, and that he had drawn upon me for £300 to cover the expenses ; that his effects, such as they were, would be sold, but that there were many claims, which it would need a large sum of money to meet, of which he would send particulars in due course. I will not trouble you with all that part of a subject, which is quite painful enough as it is. God knows how I watched the days as the time drew near when I might expect your mother and her little one. It is now nearly twelve years since that time. At last you came, but not your mother——”

“Ah, I know, she was drowned—my poor darling mother !” I interrupted.

“Don’t distress me, Terry. It is hard enough as it is. Oh, Bates ! how am I to go on ? Well, well, it must be done. Terry, take that letter and read it, and heaven comfort you, my dear, dear boy.” The old man raised his hands and covered his face, leaning his elbows on the table.

The letter he gave me was, as I have said, discoloured and yellow, and the ink was pale, but the writing was so bold and sharp that when I went to the window I could read it without difficulty. It ran thus :—

“The *Ross-shire* Indiaman, at sea, May 18th.

“MY DEAR FATHER-IN-LAW,—You have been prepared for the intelligence of poor dear Jack’s death, and how I and my child are coming to live with you, as he desired. Since I came on board I have been very sick, but I am now better. We have got very nice people on board. Jack left me very badly off ; and I have been obliged to borrow, oh, ever so much rupees ; but that is of no matter. What I am thinking of is seriously that I ought not to have come away at all. You know my marriage was a very unfortunate one for me. I could have had the best possible matches ; but I loved your son so much I did not mind anything ; and being young and inexperienced, I never could have supposed he would have proposed for me unless he was quite able to keep up a good establishment. It turned out he was quite poor ; and oh, you cannot imagine how I have suffered ! And latterly, when he took to drinking too much brandy pawnee, and grumbled dreadfully, my life was miserable ; and I was afraid to speak to any one lest he should quarrel with him. You see, I tell you everything, although I have seen such cross letters of yours to him when he only asked for money that was really wanted. My son Terence is a very pretty little fellow, but the ayah tells me he has quite a shocking temper ; and though I whip him a good deal he

gets more violent, and I am obliged to keep away from him, not to get cross and fret myself. And now, dear Doctor Brady, what I am coming to is this: I am sure I shall not like Ireland or England. My health already suffers, for I am very delicate and dreadfully sensitive. Well, then, why should you not allow me, say, rupees 600 a month, and take my dear little son, and educate him until he grows up? I would stay in India somewhere. I have plenty of friends; and Captain Fraser, who is coming down to Madras, says he can get me very nicely introduced among his friends and some nice people at Hyderabad. I think I shall leave the ship at Galle, in Ceylon, where we are going to touch, and send on little Terry and his own servants to you till I know what you think. I am an odd kind of creature, and would upset your house very much; but if you wish to have me home for a time, of course I shall go to you; and perhaps it may be necessary for me to do so, in order to sign papers and things to secure my annuity. I am told you must have lawyers to make what I propose quite legal and binding on your property, though Captain Fraser says the best way is to pay the whole into bank at once. I shall be eighteen in two months; and any of the insurance offices can calculate, he says, what £700 a year would be worth at that time of life. Under all the circumstances, I think it will be best for me to forfeit the passage-money and land at Madras or Galle till I hear from you. My address will be to the care of Colville and Arbuthnot, Madras, as I do not want Macknight, my husband's agent, who is a very troublesome sort of man, to carry on my business. You must excuse so many shakes in my hand, as the ship is not quite steady at times. I should like Terry, I think, to go into the army when he grows up. His great relations abroad would get him on.

"Hoping yet to have the pleasure of seeing you, I beg you to believe me,

"Your most affectionate daughter,

"MARY BRADY.

"Postscriptum.—Jack always promised me a set of diamond and pearl court ornaments which you have belonging to his dear mother. They will reach me safely if sent to Colville and Arbuthnot, Madras, through their agents of the same name in Hart Lane, City of London. By this mail you will receive a good many bills and accounts which my poor dear husband could not settle; and I shall have, if I stay at Madras or Galle, to write an order on you for a few thousand rupees, just to pay expenses. Mohun has some things for you, and my pet monkey. Please make Terry always remember he is a gentleman; for I am told

that Ireland is a very odd sort of place. Poor Jack was quite an exception to the people there generally, I am told. But he had his faults.—M. B.”

I read the letter with the intensest interest, little heeding the low whistles and phews which came at intervals from Mr. Bates, or the drumming of my grandfather's fingers on the table ; and then I looked up and said, “Poor mamma was drowned after she wrote this. You see, grandpapa, how fond she was of me. I am almost the last person she speaks of, except papa.”

My grandfather raised his head and looked at me with a curious stare. He then gazed across the table at Mr. Bates, who only filled his glass again, and said softly, “Good lad ! good lad ! Why shouldn't he say so ?”

My grandfather stretched out his hand, took up the letter, and returned it to the bundle. Selecting another letter from those which lay before him, still with the same expression on his face, he said, “Terry, read this next.”

It was dated “Madras, May 23rd.”

“MY DEAREST FATHER-IN-LAW,—Since I wrote to you I have been thinking more and more of what I said, and I have made up my mind not to go to Europe. I am sure you will see I am right, and that you will make the provision I propose for your dear son's poor unfortunate widow. I can live very well here in the way I am accustomed to at what Captain Fraser tells me would not be enough to have even the ordinary necessities of life in Europe. The little boy will not miss me. When he grows up, of course he will come out here ; and if you could get him into poor dear Jack's regiment I could look after him. As there are a number of ladies on board, I am not going to tell any one when I go on shore to-night. They are all spiteful old things, full of ‘gup,’ as we say, or scandal ; and I am going to play them a trick which will amuse you. There is a sergeant's wife who is a steerage passenger, and it is arranged she is to come to my cabin and take my place till the trick is discovered. I have not been on deck more than once or twice, and a little money goes a long way with these sort of people, so that not a word will be said. I ought not to disguise from you that Captain Fraser wishes, when a proper time has passed, to make me his wife, provided that you carry out my proposal, as no doubt you will. It is the best thing I could do. He has already lent me money, which I told you I wanted. To prevent any mischief from the tongues of the idle creatures who are jealous of my good looks, Captain Fraser will

go on to Galle, and will visit Mrs. Lynnett, the sergeant's wife, in my cabin, as if it was I ; but he is to come back to Madras as soon as possible ; and if I am not quite comfortable there, I shall go to Hyderabad, where he has a sister married. My only pang is parting with my son, and not seeing you. But we will all three meet some time. The ship is off Madras in the roads ; I must get ready for my plot. All the servants are delighted, as I shall let them come in different boats on shore, and only the ayah, Meetum, and Mohun, will go on with Terry. Mohun is to stay and watch Terry. Send out the money, or as much as you can, at once.

“ Your affectionate daughter,

“ With a thousand kisses,

“ MARY BRADY.

“ P.S.—I am very anxious to hear from you. Be sure you let me know how Terry looks when he arrives. I can wear the diamonds and pearls in mourning out here ; so it will be as well to let me have them soon.”

I followed every word as closely as I could ; but it was impossible to understand it. A hundred different thoughts flew through my head in a moment. My eyes rested on the letter without noting the words ; but somehow or other there was rising up in my mind the image of a frivolous, mercenary woman, who was about to abandon her child, and who was already contemplating—whilst her husband, of whom she had written so slightly, was scarcely cold in his grave—a marriage with a stranger. Could this be the mother whose image had been to me scarcely less sacred than—I could not dwell on the thought. There was silence in the room ; the two old men sat in the shade at the table, whilst I stood at the window to catch the light just vanishing into darkness. “ Then, grandpapa, where was it mamma was drowned ? and what is the meaning of all this ? I have looked at the map over and over again, and I can't understand it. My mother was wrecked after this, wasn't she ? ”

My grandfather got up from his chair and came to my side ; he put his hand on my shoulder and said in a low voice, “ I would have kept you ignorant of the truth, which is known to very few of us here. It is no wonder you cannot see into such a dark story. Your mother, my dear boy—grieved am I to say it—was not worthy of your father, and is not worthy of your love. Do not start or shrink from the truth. They say she is naturally very clever ; but in these letters there is as much folly as heartlessness. She ruined your father, and in his ruin involved me and you, my

poor fellow. Now, do you not see that it was not your mother who was swept away by that wave when the *Ross-shire's* decks were deluged by the sea?"

"And where, then, is my mother?" I cried. "What became of her? Why did she not come home to us?"

"Your tears distress me, Terry. Why fix your thoughts on one who never cared for you, or showed the smallest particle of affection? Your mother left Calcutta with the deliberate intention of abandoning you for ever. She fled to escape her creditors, and, as it seems, too plainly—you must know how your grandfather, who loves you, feels as he tells you this—with the purpose of flying with one who was her lover ere she married your father—a needy, dissolute man. She managed to get on shore at Madras unobserved—your mother could pass, I am told, for a native woman anywhere, and was an adept in disguises; her greatest talent, indeed, was displayed on the stage, and in private theatricals she made the most startling impression. At all events, she went on shore at Madras, as I have said, and then came the gale at sea which drove the ship out of her course, so that she struck on the rocks and was all but lost. The poor woman who took her place was among those who perished as she rushed out of the cabin. There was great confusion on board; and when the *Ross-shire*, in a sinking state, got into Galle harbour, the passengers left her, and not much notice was taken of the fate of the poor sergeant's wife, whilst every one spoke of your mother's melancholy death. It was best to let it be thought so. Surely the providence of God works marvels to our eyes! I cannot but feel, however, there is a compensation to all our grief in the escape you have had from the influence of such a woman. I do not ask you to restrain your sorrows. I know how rudely the tendrils of your young heart must be torn by the tale I have to tell, and how fondly you cherished the memory of that unfortunate woman; but you will cease to regret or to think of her; you must banish so unworthy a mother and wife from your thoughts, or think of her as one who is indeed lost to you—lost in a death of shame. A thousand times better had it been for her and you and us all had she been borne to her grave beneath the waters, than live to work mischief and revel in her deceit and guilt. These are hard words, my son; but they are gentle words for her conduct to me and mine—to the name she bore. Again I say, Terry, banish her from your thoughts. She has wrought misery and sorrow enough in our house; but now it would seem as if she had vanished, or as if she has sunk into some depth where our eyes had best not strive to follow her."

"She is still alive?" I asked—the word "mother" could not now be formed by my lips; I felt cold and sick at heart—"she is still alive somewhere in the world? You cannot now refuse to tell me! Where is she now?—oh! where?"

"The last news I heard of the woman was, that she was living at the court of one of the native princes in India, still beautiful, and still busy in intrigue and mischief. Unhappy creature! She has passed through a world of adventure, and has been traced under a variety of names; but in her letters to me she has always persisted in claiming our name."

"But if she married Captain Fraser, why does she not call herself after his name?"

"Alas, my dear Terry, you probe too deeply for your own peace. Captain Fraser, as I told you, was needy and dissolute. He was well connected—by marriage a cousin of the Desmonds, and by blood allied with some of the great Scotch families which rule in India. Well, when he found that I would not accede to the modest request of my daughter-in-law, he thought perhaps that it would be a useless and dangerous experiment to marry so extravagant a woman. At all events, he married a very plain, delicate—but, as I have heard, very amiable—girl, who came out to India to her father, a great civilian, and who had a large fortune."

"By the bye, I hear that Mr. Desmond has taken their daughter to live with him," interrupted Mr. Bates. "Where is Colonel Fraser since the row?"

"He is somewhere in what they call the Deccan, I hear. When Malcolm died all his money went to Mrs. Fraser; after her death it was found Fraser could not touch a penny of it, for every farthing was settled on her daughter most rigidly, and then went away to distant relations, except a considerable sum to his friend Desmond."

"Miss Fraser will be well off, Doctor," observed Mr. Bates; "only for Mary Butler, Desmond would adopt her; if Sir Richard does not marry, she might own the Castle estates, and Kilmoyle, instead of poor Mary. And then, Doctor, who knows? She might take a fancy to Terry, and the land would go back into the old hands."

"It is a charming fancy sketch, Bates. You are better fitted to be a poet than an attorney. I have too many realities, and sad ones, to indulge in any dreams of the future with the least ray of light in them."

"Oh, sir, if you knew how dark my future looks too," I sobbed. "My dreams are gone indeed. But I tell you, grandfather, that

I will never be satisfied till I see her face to face, and let her explain what has passed."

"See her!" exclaimed the old man, almost angrily: "see her after what you have heard! Why, only I thought it would be needless, I was about to ask you to promise me solemnly, if at any future time of your life you should be near her, to shun that woman as you would the Evil One."

"She is my mother, sir," I interrupted.

"But I tell you, Terence, she is as dangerous as she is bad. Do you know that, far distant as she is from us, for years she was plotting against you, or rather I believed she was, whereas her real object was to extort money from me by working on my fears. She declared she would come over and claim her child—that she had witnesses to prove all the stories I had heard of her were false—that her husband's last will and his last words were, that she was to have charge of you; and she raked up all kinds of accusations against the dead man's memory, which at least she would have dragged before the public. She employed Mohun as her spy in my house, and had minute accounts of everything which passed till I sent him away. I am now quite satisfied," he continued, angrily, "that some of the large sums I paid after your father's death were on forgeries, for, in addition to her arts of imitation, she can copy handwriting so as to defy all but the minutest inspection. Terence," he exclaimed, passionately, "if you ever speak to her—should you, as is most unlikely, ever meet—you will disobey my last injunction to you, and you will dishonour your father's memory."

The servant bringing in lights silenced me as I was about to fly into a wild, passionate vindication. I could only sob in silence.

We sat at table, and my grandfather, after a pause, continued—

"You know well enough I would not advise you to do anything unbecoming a son. When you are a little older, and can understand what she has done clearly, you will feel my advice is right. But it is not likely you will ever see her. You will all your life, however, have to endure the consequences of her acts. All the efforts I was making to clear off the incumbrances from my poor estate for my son, and you after him, have been made of no avail, and we are more deeply in debt than ever. One of her constant threats was that she would get you carried away from me; and she actually took steps to frighten me into the belief she was in earnest. You remember, Bates, my writing to you about the two fellows who stopped at the 'Desmond Arms' one night, and made so many inquiries after Terry's movements, and who came from Galway and went back there?"

"Faith, I do, Doctor ; but I told you if it meant anything at all it was to screw some more money out of you. Terry would have made a large bundle for them to carry off, and I wouldn't give much for their lives if you raised the county on them. I dare say you would have made a fight, and used your voice if not your fists, Terry ?"

"Perhaps you were right, Bates ; but anyway, I confess I have a terror of the woman with whom I battled in secret for so many years. She was quite capable of getting an injury done to him to injure me and to have her revenge. It was my fear of something of the kind made me send him to school, for there I knew he would be less accessible—he would have boys always around him. Ah ! Bates, my heart sank within me when I got Dr. Ball's letter telling me of the terrible cruise. I cannot feel he is safe when he is out of my sight even now. I am full of vague, nervous fears ; all I pray is to live till he is able to protect himself."

"Well, Doctor, it seems as if he was pretty near that stage already. I will bid you good night now. It is quite obvious you have done what is right. Keep what you have heard to yourself, my young friend—there is no use in telling all the world ; and I believe, for the matter of that, a good many people have suspicious about that drowning, and that in India, at all events, there is a good part of the story known. But people won't bother their heads about it. It's not the boy's fault, and these things are soon forgotten. Good night ; we will have another look into these serious affairs to-morrow and see what can be done. I must take the night mail to Dublin ; but I hope we can strike out some way of arranging matters for you, my dear old friend."

CHAPTER X.

THE BANSHEE.

WHEN Mr. Bates withdrew, my grandfather remained deep in thought for a moment, and then called me over to him.

"You see in this desk, Terence, are all the letters relating to yourself, your poor father, and her of whom we have now been speaking—in fact, all that relates to your sad story, to her exactions and frauds, and to the money that has been torn from me. They are in this secret drawer—it closes so ; put your finger there and press. See, it opens ! Here, again, are documents and deeds

connected with the property, such as it is. Bates has the leases and all that kind of thing. This is a duplicate key, and I give it to you to keep. Never let it leave your possession. You can when you are old enough examine the papers in my desk, and read and think for yourself. So now take it back to the study, and ring the bell for the servants. You must read prayers for them to-night, as I am tired and want to go to bed ; but come in and bid me good night as usual."

It was ten o'clock, and the bell rang for prayers. Only two of the servants were Protestants ; but an old crone who, long past her work, spent her days by the kitchen fire, and slept in the gardener's house, named Biddy Daly, was accustomed to accompany them to the parlour in order to give vent to her groans and moans, and to have a look at the "young masther," as she termed my grandfather, and "Masther Jack's child," and to make a formal statement on the subject of her rheumatiz to the Doctor—indeed, she was wont to waylay him at all hours, and in unexpected places for that purpose, and no menaces or repression shook her intrepidity of soul or her courage in communicating the latest information concerning her bodily health, under all circumstances and at all times. Even the interference of the priest, which was brought to bear in a friendly manner by a little intrigue between him and his old friend, did not deter Biddy from the "parlour prayers for the Protesdans," as she called them.

"It's not to listen to their prayers, poor craychers—the Virgin between us and harm!—your reverence, I goes ; but shure, whin I'm racked wid the pains I've got in sarvin' the family, the laste the young masther can do is to ordher poor ould Biddy some stuff. I always take some holy wather in wid me for fear of the divil, and ses me own Pather and Avey afore I go to bed—indeed I do, your reverence."

When Biddy saw me sitting with the Prayer-book before me, and that the Doctor had retired, she expressed her feeling of displeasure very audibly, and lamenting, with several ochemes, that "I nivir can see the young masther, and me worse than iver to-night—me bottle of stuff all tuk, too. It's little good yer prayers 'if do me this night," crawled out of the room again.

I read the service for my little congregation, and taking up my candle whilst the servants were fastening up doors and windows, went softly to the room in which hung the picture I had regarded with such indescribable affection till that moment. The apartment was in darkness, but by holding the candle over my head I caught the face, whilst the greater part of the painting was but partly visible. How lovely ! how innocent ! how pure ! I had

ever deemed it before. But now, as I looked, the eyes, in their cold dreaminess, had a glitter like that which filled the orbs of the tiger-cat with which she was playing—the lips seemed bitter and cruel—and the attitude in which she was lying, her dress, and all the luxurious accessories of the painting, belonged, in my mind, to a frivolous, extravagant woman, heartless as the wall against which it rested. There was a positive fascination in the steady, sleepy smile of the eyes, and lowering my candle, with a shudder, I mounted the stairs to my grandfather's bed-room. He was in bed, apparently reading by the light of his lamp, the curtains drawn on the side next the door, so that he did not perceive my entrance or hear my footsteps. A large Bible was open on his reading-stand; but I observed that his eyes were half closed, as if he were engaged in thought, and that his lips were moving, as though he were speaking to himself. At last he opened his eyes, and seeing me, said, with his usual smile—"Ah! there you are, Terry. Come to bid me good night. It's nearly time, or you will lose your beauty sleep. Well, and how did you get on? I wish you had prescribed for old Biddy in place of me. She actually crept upstairs here, and only I threatened her with the watch-stand as she put her head through the curtains, the old nuisance would have commenced her litany as usual."

"Biddy came into the parlour, but she vanished when she saw you were not there, and I thought she went down the kitchen stairs."

"I really must have her brought to her senses, if she has any. Do you know, Terry, I have been having most curious waking dreams: talking so much of a certain subject has filled my poor old brain full of fancies, and as soon as I had banished old Biddy, others took her place."

"Others! What do you mean, grandfather?"

"Well, I can scarcely say, in my half-dozing state. The curtain appeared to open, and a face like that—you know—below stairs looked in at me; but, of course, when I roused myself it was gone. The idea was not pleasant, for the look of the lady-visitor was not at all amiable. All this means, Terry, an excited nervous system, and a good deal of indigestion, and you shall hand me over that medicine chest and give me one of my famous 'composers' before you go."

I had walked towards the escritoire in which the chest was, when my attention was attracted by an exclamation from my grandfather, and a whispered cry. "Terry, look!—look! there it is again."

As I turned towards the bed the curtains were just closing, as

if some one who had drawn them aside let them go ! But I had a glimpse of something like a face, and a pair of hands clasped together, inside the bed ere the folds met together. Never doubting that it was old Biddy who had come to persecute "the masther," as she had been very troublesome lately, and regarded his illness as a personal wrong to herself rather than to him, I took up my candle and sprang swiftly round the bed. There was no one in the room ! The door was slightly ajar ; I went out on the landing, peered over the banisters—not a creature visible. The voice of my grandfather called me back. "Well, and have you caught the culprit ?" he asked. "Give her a good shaking and have her locked up in her room to-night."

"But Biddy's not there. She's not on the stairs or anywhere I could see."

"You saw the old woman yourself, didn't you ?"

"I saw somebody, certainly, as if the curtains had been opened and let fall again. It must be Biddy."

My grandfather seemed a little agitated.

"Go down," said he, "and see if the servants are all in bed. Tell the cook to look if Biddy is in her room."

I did as I was directed, and in a few minutes returned with a paler face, to say—"Old Biddy was fast asleep in bed, where she has been, they say, for the last hour ; and not one of the servants has been upstairs."

"Then the only thing I can think of, Terry," he replied, with a faint smile, "is that we have both seen the Banshee. I believe there is a lady of that description who does this branch of the family the honour of attending on them when *in periculo*. At all events, I shall take my composer ; and you, my dear boy, will, I hope, sleep away all your troubles and cares under the protection of Him who will shield you from all danger, as long as you seek His grace and protection."

I went over to the escritoire, took the medicine-chest, and was coming back with it towards the table—my grandfather had turned round in bed to screen the light from his eyes—the lamp shone full on the folds of the heavy grey curtains between me and the door—I was as collected and as sensible as I am now when, with pen in hand, in the light of day, and in possession of my senses, I record what happened.

The curtain opened a little way—two thin white arms and hands, with interlaced fingers, were lifted up over the bed through the opening, and I saw a pale face, with fair or white hair falling over the shoulders, bent down as if the eyes were fixed on the old man. The hands unlocked thrice, and were clasped together again

with a slow waving motion, as if in sorrow or distress, and then the apparition vanished ! Not a word came from my grandfather's lips. I stood rooted to the spot. The appearance was so sudden, that ere I could do more than utter a smothered ejaculation of terror, it was gone ! The cry aroused my grandfather, who had been lying with closed eyes, and he looked round and asked, "What is the matter now, Terry ?" With more presence of mind and self-control than I had thought myself capable of exerting, I said, "Oh, nothing, sir. I nearly let the case fall ;" and indeed my hands were shaking as if with an ague fit.

Putting down the case on the table, I ran swiftly towards the door, candle in hand, looked over the banisters, into the hall, up and down the corridor, behind the big clock, examined all the doors on the landing, and was back almost ere the curtains had ceased to vibrate.

To no eye but mine had the figure been visible ; or at least, if my grandfather saw it, he kept his own counsel. But he said very calmly, "It is time for you to go to bed indeed. There ; now let us see what my composer will do. I have strange fancies in my head, and am haunted by that wretched old Biddy, who has set one of her kindred witches to persecute me."

I kissed the old man's brow, turned down his lamp, and fled along the passage to my own room, locked the door, and throwing myself on my knees, implored the mercy and protection of Heaven. My pulse was beating wildly, and I almost cried aloud with terror as I rose from my knees, for the copy of "the" picture above my little bed seemed to move, and the face, to my disordered senses, assumed an expression of animation, and a smile of derision curled the opening lips. I gazed at the canvas steadily, and perceived that I was distracted by imaginary terrors ; but somehow or other I could not bear the thought that these eyes would be on me at night staring in the leaden look which the copyist had conveyed to them, and so I got up, and with great difficulty unhooked the frame and turned the face to the wall. I was a great strong lad ; I had no superstitious fears, no morbid fancies, except those which were connected with my brooding over the absent mother I had indeed lost at last ; but somehow or other there was upon me a terror—a secret horror, indescribable, profound—at what I had seen. Was I awake ? Could I doubt the evidence of my senses ? Had not my grandfather seen it too ? But he was weak, nervous, and excited. Was I quite sure I was not led away by my own vivid fancy to believe in the repetition of a sick man's dream. I could not bear to blow out the light ; and as it flickered in the currents of air which sympathized with the rising storm, the

Shadows on the wall begat new terrors. My head was throbbing ; I heard the beatings of my own heart as though some one was thumping the pillow on which I lay. The muttering of the thunder and the flashes of lightning which now flitted through the shutters were a welcome distraction. As the storm rolled towards the house, and the rain beat against the glass, I felt more at ease. But sleep would not visit my eyelids. There came on me a lethargy, in which I dreamt as I lay awake. It seemed as if I could look out into the corridor through wall and door, and that I could see where my grandfather lay asleep. His slumbers were agitated : his hands played about with the coverlet, and his arms were now and then lifted in the air as he tossed on his uneasy bed. Suddenly I beheld, growing out of the shadow of the door of his room, which was opened by an invisible hand, a shape which waved like a vapour in the faint light of the night-lamp. It gathered form and substance as I gazed—a woman's face, of ghastly pallor, peering with weeping eyes through masses of white hair, and outstretched arms raised as if in anguish. A crashing peal of thunder shook the house, a cry of agony, which pierced the deep roar of the angry heavens, came from the corridor ! In a second I was awake. I had thrown off the nightmare, and unlocked my door and rushed out into the passage with the candle in my hand. Mr. Bates, in his nightshirt, was standing at his bedroom door with a light in the current.

“Did you hear a scream, Terry—did you cry out just at the last clap of thunder?”

“Oh, sir, I'm so glad you are awake. Come to grandfather's room. I fear something has happened.”

For all my agitation, it did not escape me that the door which I had shut as I came away was now half open.

In a moment all was told. My grandfather was lying as if he had been trying to rise, and had fallen back on his pillow ! I had never seen death yet ; but as I gazed on the face before me, I knew the Conqueror had been there. The old man's eyes were open, looking straight into space ; his jaw had fallen, and a little stream of blood trickled slowly from his lip upon the pillow ; the hand of one arm was clenched as if in anger across his heart, the other still held the curtain in its gripe.

CHAPTER XI.

OUT ON THE WORLD.

OH, how I welcomed the day as its first streaks lighted the waters of the lake ! The night was too full of terrors. Mr. Bates sat beside me in the parlour, trying to comfort me. There was no sound in the house, save the creaking of the boards as the servants busied themselves in arranging the room in which the dead man lay. Dr. Brophy had already seen him ; there could be no doubt of the cause of death. Apoplexy had stricken the old man, "caused," said the doctor, "probably by undue exertion before he was recovered from his last serious attack." When the servants were summoned by Mr. Bates and myself, they all concurred in stating they heard a loud cry—"yell," the housekeeper said—just as the last great peal of thunder made the rooms quiver ; indeed, they were nearly all awake, and the maids were cowering together in their room at the time. Old Biddy, whom I sent one of them to look for, was found fast asleep in spite of her ailments ; and the gardener declared "she was snorin' as if she was strivin' to bate the thunder."

I told Mr. Bates what I had seen. He shook his head, and said, "My boy, you have gone through too much ; I must get the doctor to have a look at you. See here, Terry ; your grandfather's old and faithful servant will take charge of the house, and see everything done that is necessary. I will take on myself to give the orders needed ; but I must go to Dublin to-night. You can do no good fretting and moping here ; and as I know I am one of your guardians, I must begin to use my power. Nay, my boy, I will not, if you desire indeed to stay. But I advise you to come with me, and we will return together when the proper time comes."

After a little I gave way and consented to leave Lough-ra-Carra. I gave my last embrace to him I loved so well. A thousand memories of his tender affection—of his kindness to me—his care and solicitude—his anxiety—of his disappointments and suffering—crowded upon me, and with agonized sobbings I pressed my lips to the cold cheek, and addressed passionate entreaties for forgiveness for all my offences to the ear which could never hear again till the dead awake to judgment.

It was all over. As chief mourner I had followed the remains of my only friend to the grave. It was, after the Irish fashion, "a great funeral." All the neighbouring gentry came or sent

their carriages ; squires, farmers, peasants trooped to the church ; the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese attended the cortège to the gates, in company with the priests of the district ; and when it was done and I sat in my room, "breaking my heart," as Honour declared, the noise of chinking plates and glasses, and the sounds which came up from the hall and large dining-room, where breakfast was laid out for all who chose to partake of it, appeared to be a mockery of what we had just heard from the reverend rector, whose voice was audible below, delivering an *éloge* on the deceased.

Those were weary days during which I struggled with fresh sorrow as every familiar object recalled the good old man. Mr. Bates remained with me, looking over papers, burning letters, examining accounts, paying bills, seeing creditors and land agents, solicitors and local attorneys. The house and servants smelt of fresh crape, and even the summer sun could not dispel the gloom which haunted every chamber. Mr. Bates grew more grave and anxious as he proceeded with his work of investigation.

"It is a terrible muddle. But I can make out well enough there will not be much for you ; and I doubt if we can save even Lough-na-Carra. You are heir to everything he had, and, except some legacies to servants, and souvenirs to a few friends, your grandfather leaves, in trust till you are twenty-one years old, all he possessed. But it is terribly mortgaged and incumbered, and the tenants have played the deuce lately. He was always too easy with the fellows. Sir Philip has renounced his trust, as he has too much to do ; Sir Richard is too careless to be of much use—and, indeed, I wonder why my old friend put him in ; and I suppose I shall have to do the best I can for you. Just see what odd things happen ; of course I don't pay the least attention to their impertinence."

I took the letter which my guardian handed to me. It was addressed—"To the Executors of Myles Brady, Esquire, M.D., Lough-na-Carra, Kilmoyle, Ireland," and ran as follows :—

"20th June, 18—.

"Chancery Lane, London.

"GENTLEMEN,—Noticing the death of Myles Brady, Esq., M.D., of Lough-na-Carra, we beg to inform you that, as attorneys for Mary Brady, widow of the late Captain John Brady, of her Majesty's —th Regiment of Infantry, and mother of Terence Brady, minor, it is our client's intention to take immediate steps to assume the guardianship of her son, which belongs to her by law ; and also to enforce from the trustees of the estate of the late

Dr. Brady, in addition to such sum as the Court may order for her son's education and maintenance, repayment of various sums, amounting in all to Rs. 73,607 and 4 annas, with interest at 5 per cent., due from the deceased to her late husband. Whilst Dr. Brady lived, our client, from various motives of a highly honourable and disinterested character, refrained from doing more than establishing the validity of her claims; and writing under correction of advices to be received from India, we may remark that an immediate settlement might induce her to accept a portion of her debt in lieu of the whole, and at the same time resign her to the possibility of leaving her son in charge of those to whom Dr. Brady may have made him over.

“Your obedient servants,

“McTURK & SKINNER.”

“The scoundrels!” ejaculated Mr. Bates. “They don't know whom they have got to deal with here. These are fellows who speculate in Indian cases, and are allied with a set of greater rascals, if possible, out in Bombay. They are at the bottom of half the appeals to the Privy Council, and are on the look-out for claims all over the world to keep their dirty trade going. Can they suppose we don't know poor Jack Brady was insolvent, or that we are ignorant of what a nice lady their client is? Dash their impudence! Let them try it, that's all.”

It was resolved to let Lough-na-Carra, as soon as it could be made out what there was to let; to sell part of the estate; and then to see what could be done with me. My natural inclination led me to enter the army; but Mr. Bates was not so much enamoured of the profession of arms as most Irishmen, even of his class, are. He began to doubt if the rent of Lough-na-Carra and the sale of the best part of the property would do more than pay off some incumbrances and provide for the interest of mortgages, leaving a very small pittance for my education; and he argued that if money were to be raised for my commission and to lodge for purchase of steps, it would sink the little property altogether, and leave me little or nothing beyond my pay to live on—and that's “easier,” said he, “to talk about than to do.”

Sir Richard Desmond's only interference was on that point—“The lad, after all, is a gentleman, and what else can he do but carry a sword? The law is a beggarly profession—I beg your pardon, Bates, for you belong to the branch of it which is never raised to the peerage, and is always making money. The boy is not made for the Church, and there's not a living for him to be brought up to. Doctors are respectable, and they are lucky in

Ireland, where they are made knights and baronets, and make fortunes, and have banished general practitioners among the poorest community in Europe ; but I don't see my way to the boy's becoming a model medico, either surgeon or doctor."

But Sir Richard was a languid, easy man : when he stated his case he did not care about fighting it. For myself, provided I could not go into the army, I did not care much what career in life was selected for me ; but I had positively made up my mind to bend the course of any pursuit in which I might be engaged towards India. There was a hand pointing to that land of mystery, whichever way I turned—a secret sympathy which called me from afar, and whispered that there was some purpose of my life to be served which it would be well to carry out quickly. There was much work to be done with the lawyers, and meantime it was proposed I should return to Dr. Ball's ; but I felt I could do more good at a school where there was less Latin and Greek, where I would have complete change of scene. Sir Richard suggested "Eton" or "Harrow ;" Mr. Bates said—"No ! we've got no money. I don't so much say for the charges, though Eton would be high enough, but for the tastes and incidental expenses. Besides, Terry, with his brogue and his ways, would be in misery among them, and would get into no end of rows with his hot blood, in which he would most likely get licked, until he learned some pugilistic tricks from his opponents."

Sir Richard, for once, persisted in his opinion. "I am for an English school ; I don't say for a girl, though women are cosmopolitan. But from what I remember of my youth, I have no great faith in the British boarding-school. I can't fancy a worse training for a young girl than to be at your fashionable watering-place, and to see the full tide of fashion, frivolity, and vice flowing under her eyes, as if it were the ocean of life itself. Boys must be men, and there is no use in stamping on them early in life a brand which marks them with a distinction which is very like a certificate of inferiority. We must submit to lose our nationality in the imperial vortex, or be treated as provincials."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROPRIETARY COLLEGE.

AS a compromise, it was resolved I should be sent to the great Preparatory College of Sweatenham ; and Mr. Bates and

myself were soon afterwards on our way to the pleasant town on which the founders of the seminary had pitched as a good place to feather the nests of its principal and masters.

When the packet ran alongside the dock quay at Liverpool, I was surprised to see a swarming, ragged crowd, the counterpart of that which I had left behind me, save that they were sulky instead of being goodhumoured, scrambling for the luggage of the passengers, for I had been taught to regard dirt and poverty as exclusively Irish. But, as Mr. Bates said, "If they're not Irish, they're Welsh—cousin-germans, if not brothers—hating each other in a brotherly fashion, at all events."

The smoke of the grimy city, its squalor and its misery, the yellow Mersey groaning beneath its burden of keels, the forest of masts rising above the dock walls like the trees in some garden where gold and silver are planted and cropped—the bustle in the streets, the vast bales of cotton towering in gigantic vans, and the long piles of sombre warehouses hauling up and letting down merchandise from their lean arm-like cranes—all astonished rather than pleased me.

Forth from the dock, slow warping to the stream, came the bow of a great ship, with her white sails gracefully festooned from the yards, and her lofty spars shining like polished metal; a huge ensign flew from her gaff, displaying its pale stars and bright blue ground, and broad flakes of red on the white cloth. The crew, manning the capstan with a "stamp and go" to the sound of a fiddle, shouted in chorus as the Magnus Apollo of the band closed each stanza of his song, and the spanker flapped in the breeze like thunder. But above all the tumult and din came that bitter sobbing, the echoes of the fountain of sorrow and despair flooding from the heart, which can only be heard as one listens to the farewell of the Irish emigrant ship.

There, crowded on poop and forecastle, and penned in terrified droves, like cattle, between the bulwarks, swayed in passionate lamentation, the living freight, young and old—the children going to the parents, the parents to the children—the scattered members of the race flocking to their Jerusalem beyond the seas, which had for them unutterable terror, to escape from the land for which they bore such unutterable love.

"It's well for the poor devils," said Mr. Bates; "they'll be better off where they're going to. The fact is, my dear Terry, the economists have discovered there may be too much of a good thing in obeying the commands of Heaven. Paddy has overdone the primæval mandate, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.' The earth is not Ireland, you know."

"But I heard Major Turnbull talking at the Castle one night, and saying there was great difficulty in getting recruits; and there go, I suppose, a couple of hundred or more fine stout soldiers."

"Yes, Terry; but the supply is equal to the demand when they like to pay for it. That ship is equal to a regiment, if you let the young ones grow and count the married couples. Here we are on shore now."

The first appearance of Sweatenham College was very imposing. The long frontage of Gothic arcading, its Gothic chapel, its spires and clock-tower, the broad expanse of lawn lined with trees, the clean-swept walks, gave the establishment an aspect of importance, not to say grandeur, in my eyes, which was by no means diminished when I saw three or four of the masters strolling inside the railings in all the dignity of cap and gown, and beheld the glories of the college livery on the porter who opened the gate. It was play-hour, and from the rear of the college came the hum of voices, and the roar of the boys in the frenzy of cricket or foot-ball, pierced by the treble now and then of some youngster.

Mr. Bates came out, after a visit to the Principal which seemed to me an age, for I was expecting every moment to be summoned to his dreadful presence, and I had undergone a good deal of critical examination from several pale-faced limpid youths in trencher-caps, who were stalking about with books in their hands, and made their remarks aloud.

"I say, Grubby, he must be Irish. There's 'T. Brady, passenger, Kilmoyle to Dublin,' on that old box. Dublin is in Ireland, you know."

"I never saw such a shabby lot of traps. Did you? Perhaps his swell things are coming by next train?"

Mr. Bates's appearance delivered me from an ordeal which I was beginning to bear very badly. He gave the driver directions to go to the Rev. Mr. Snell, Sabine Villa, and explained to me as we passed through the well-ordered streets of the town of Sweatenham (which looks like a seaside town without any sea), that I was to be put in the house of the aforesaid reverend gentleman, as he had a vacancy for a boarder. "The head-master thought me fortunate in getting under Snell's roof;" and Mr. Bates added that it must be the case, for Dr. Moody spoke with such deliberation and care, there must be a meaning in every "and" or "so" he uttered.

Sabine Villa was a staring red-brick house, fenced in from the road by a wall tipped with iron spikes; in front was a ragged space, in which gravel and grass held divided sway. At one side of the house a squat wing was thrown out, lighted by a large arched window; and a path, separated from the land by a narrow

railing, led from the door of this wing to a gate opening on a lane from the main road. Ever and anon, as we were waiting for the bell to be answered, boys in trencher caps flitted backwards and forwards along the path, carrying rolls, cakes, eggs, and suspicious-looking little paper bags and baskets into the squat wing, and through the opened window came the clatter of plates and knives and forks, and a hum as of a multitude at a banquet.

A weak-eyed, feeble-legged lad, with a dirty face and a manner of great irritability, as if he were in a normal state of being aggravated, informed us that "Mrs. Snell was at 'ome, but Mr. Snell would not be back till after the young gentlemen's dinner, as he couldn't abide the smell of it," and led Mr. Bates and myself into a crypt-like parlour, filled with rigid, straight-backed chairs, a hard-looking little round table, covered with old magazines and some theological works, including "Vol. II." of "Snell's Sermons," and a small library, over which was a bust of Socrates. A portrait of a clergyman in his surplice, with a view of the sea and a Roman amphitheatre in ruins as a background, decorated one wall, and was faced by a photograph, enlarged to unusual hideousness, of a thin, flat-cheeked woman, with a small, sharp nose and round forehead, from which the hair was scooped into the fangs of a high comb presiding over the back of the head.

Mr. Bates sent up his card and a note from Dr. Moody, and after a time we were summoned to proceed to the drawing-room, where Mrs. Snell would be happy to see us.

A lady whom I recognised as the original of the portrait on the wall was seated in an arm-chair before a fire, although then it was a hot summer day. The comb had been cashiered, and the hair which had been entrusted to its guardianship, was now coaxed into three or four corkscrew curls by the side of each cheek, as if to screen the permanent blush which enriched them. Mrs. Snell wore heavy chains of gold and many rings, and gazed at us through a gold eye-glass, perched on the narrow ledge of her delicate nose, as we came in. She waved condescendingly to Mr. Bates to take a chair near at hand; but my worthy guardian, declaring he found the weather rather warm, begged to be excused going so near the fire, and Mrs. Snell was obliged to throw out a thin cold voice at him, coughing behind her hand as she spoke, and conveying an aroma of ether through the room.

"Snell is out just now; but I will give orders for Brady's reception, and that—I see his name is Brady, and that—and yours is Bates? Well, Brady is Irish. We have a good many of them, and that—what illnesses has Brady had?"

I repeated the small catalogue of my ailments, as far as I could remember them, at my guardian's request.

"That will do very nicely, and that ; he's had his measles and scarlatina, and that—that's very well. His books and that Snell will look to. Mrs. Prince, my housekeeper, will attend to his clothes, and that, and his things will be all put away. I look to diet and all that as my own share. Perhaps, Brady, you had better go now and find your way to your room. Any one will tell you where Mrs. Prince is, or you may ring the bell and ask the page, and that."

Mr. Bates's face wore a quaint look as I left the room. I wandered into the hall, and having no earthly notion of Mrs. Prince's whereabouts, was about to open the parlour door to ring the bell, when the pale footman appeared in the passage, and exclaimed—

"Hullo ! I say, none of that. If Snell saw you going into the parlour after you've entered, there would be a row, I can tell you. It's against the rules ; and rules is rules here, I can tell you."

I had serious notions of boxing the ears of the gentleman in the olive livery and yellow waistcoat, but my purpose was checked by the entrance of a middle-aged woman, at the rustle of whose silk the footman became exceedingly exasperated.

"Mrs. Prince, ma'am, I caught this young genelman—a new boy, ma'am—goin' into the private parler——"

"That will do, James ; you may go."

There was something very mild in the tone of Mrs. Prince's voice, and yet there was something very decided, and James retreated through the green-baize door with his anecdote unfinished. I had time to survey the speaker, and to see that she was a plump, middle-aged person, with a widow's cap, and an air of sleekness and composure about her, as though all went well with her. She had a kindly look too, and as I met her gaze I rejoiced that there was such a pleasant person in the Sabine Villa.

"Your things are taken up and put away in your room," she said. "They were badly packed up, and most of them will require marking. Have you had your dinner ?—yes ! Well, then, come, and I will show you your room. It is fortunate you have a good set with you this half. There will be Seton Sinclair, Scotch—a sturdy, fine lad ; Langley, working hard for prizes ; and Mowbray, doing nothing, and spending too much money, spoiling his teeth and stomach, but not doing any mischief—at least, as far as I know ; and you will get on well if you make friends. 'Agree with thy enemy quickly,' you know ; and all boys at school are enemies to the new-comers."

Shall I ever forget the first morning ! A bell was tolling as if for the execution of a criminal : it was the first bell for prayers. The day that was about to open upon me was full of terrors ; I had heard of all kinds of trials to which I was to be subjected ere the sun had set. I was "to fight Massingberd"—he was the last boy at Wicken's. It was the rule that the last boy at Snell's and the last boy at Wicken's should engage in combat if they were at all of the same size and years, and Massingberd and I answered the conditions pretty well, except that he was older and I was bigger. Then I would have to give a supper in the evening. It was against the rules of the school to do so, but it was the rule of the house for a new boy to stand treat ; and I had confessed myself the possessor of five golden sovereigns, which Mr. Bates had slipped into my hands ere he drove away. There was also an intimation that I should provide a considerable entertainment at Figgis's, the pastrycooks, which was "out of bounds ;" but Talbot, junior, would run the blockade with a sovereign and carry in the supplies. I was also to shy shillings into the diving pool, and to take a header into the Sally Hole. I was to join the cricket club—to become a member of the Junior Sweatenham Foot-ball Club—and to be tried with Burley *tertius* with a pair of sculls on the river—and I was to be examined by "Moody" to see what class I should join. All these and other matters had been confided to me at tea the previous evening, when I returned from seeing my good guardian, Mr. Bates, off on his journey home.

"Terry, my lad," quoth he, "you are big enough to take care of yourself. I need not tell you to work hard, for you have no one to look to but yourself. You will see a lot of young scamps here who do nothing ; and you will see, too, I'm sure, a fair proportion of fellows who are determined to get on in the world ; and you will have to decide which lot you will belong to. I have no doubt of your choice. Try and keep friends with all, but let none of them—I'm sure I need not say this—bully you or insult you. If you act like a lad of honour and spirit, you will always find plenty of lads to stand by you and prevent your being bullied. Play at their games with all your might, and when fun is over work with all your might too, and you need not fear for the future."

CHAPTER XIII.

MY TRIALS BEGIN.

FULL of these sage counsels, I had returned to Sabine Villa just as the bell was ringing for tea, and met a rush of boys in the narrow lane which nearly carried me off my legs. The tide bore me into the study, as it was called—the great whitewashed room inside the squat wing—in which were rows of benches and deal tables spread with cups and saucers. At one end was a raised seat and desk, at the other a kind of pulpit, and the wall was adorned with tin sconces and a large black board smeared with chalk. At the end of the centre table sat an angry-looking young man, with a red, blotchy face, straight light hair, and feeble sight, so like “Dowly,” the footman, that the boys did not hesitate to assert the latter was the unacknowledged brother of Snell, taken in to economize the family arrangements. “Snell” was dressed in black, and wore a white tie, and a college-gown, which gave him a clerical, but not a reverend, appearance; and he glowered down the tables, which were lined by double files of boys, face to face and back to back, in a manner which indicated intense animosity to his youthful charges. Enormous cauldrons, filled with a preparation of water and some unknown leaf, which would have been tasteless had it not been mawkish, were placed at the head of each table; and mounds of coarse-looking bread, cut in slices and smeared with a composition known to the consumers as “Snell’s compound ointment,” were erected at intervals along the line. Dowly, as the footman was called, assisted by a small boy, who received secret kicks, pinches, and hair pullings, delivered by unseen legs and hands, had charge of the arrangements, under the supervision of Mr. Snell.

“Grace!” shouted the latter, in a sharp, jerking voice. “Brady, grace!”

It was the rule for the last comer to say grace; but as I knew nothing of it, and had crept quietly into my place, “No. 39,” where my mug and plate were laid, this sudden call quite upset me. Mr. Dowly laid before me a dirty card, on which was printed the formula to be used, and I was about to commence, when my neighbour clapped his hand on my mouth, and said—“Don’t. By Jove, Snell will be down on you. You must go to the desk.” With the consciousness that all eyes were upon me, and quickened by the smart tap of the master’s rule on the table, I made for the desk, card in hand, and proceeded to read the grace. At first

there was silence ; after a word or two I was aware that there was a little tittering ; then the benches seemed to shake ; and at last a roar of laughter interrupted me in the midst of my task. In vain Mr. Snell thumped the table and called for silence ; the merriment continued unabated ; and at last I descended from my rostrum, and in obedience to the master's hand, sought my place again.

"What is it all about ?" whispered I to my neighbour. "Why are you all laughing ?"

"Oh ! it is lovely. It's better than a play."

"What is ? What is it ?"

"What is it ?—why, your brogue ! I never heard anything like it since once I was taken to the play to see Power."

I was aware, indeed, that there was a peculiar rhythm in my way of speaking. I had been brought up in a district where the pronunciation of English was subjected to remarkable inflections ; but it did not occur to me that there was anything very ludicrous in the fact. At Dr. Ball's we did not laugh at M'Cracken, the son of the Town Major, who spoke Glasgow ; nor at Bull, the son of a clerk in the Castle, whose speech was pure Somersetshire. As I ate my bread and drank my Snell's peculiar, my thoughts dwelt on the future in store for me, if every word I said was to be the signal for inextinguishable laughter on the part of my companions. The meal was over, and what was called study commenced ; but I was excused, as I had no books, and I sat watching my future companions with all the earnestness which marks a boy's investigation of his fellows. It is well that the boy is not the father of the man. In the little world of which I was a new citizen, there was such selfishness and trickery as would render men contemptible and hateful. Looking at the rows of youthful faces—ugly, handsome, and neither—apparently bent over their books, one could scarcely imagine that so many of these studious youths were engaged in the most strenuous attempts to do anything but learn their lessons. One fellow was doing his Euripides with a crib ; another had a key for his verses ; a third was getting his Horace "done" by one of the senior boys, whom he was to reward with a tip. Of course there were some hard-working lads in the mass, striving to read as well as they could amid the secret volleys of paper pellets, and the petty persecutions to which they were subjected unseen of the Reverend Snell, who was engaged in revising the proofs of a "New Grammar," which all the boys at Sweatenham were soon to be compelled to buy at twice its cost price. How many toiling fathers, who were depriving themselves of comforts and screwing "the house" to keep

their boys at college, were then solacing themselves with the thought that they would reap their reward in seeing their old age crowned by the success in life of their sons! How many fond mothers were thinking and dreaming and praying, morning and night, for the welfare of those who were only scheming in order to make the least possible use of the advantages for which so many sacrifices had been made at home!

There was Whittle, whom his father, as he worked in his chambers, or perambulated Westminster Hall with his lean bag in hand, fondly believed to be reading hard for the college exhibition and a scholarship, engaged in the perusal of a *Racing Calendar*—a keen hand at making a book—for ever dodging to get off to the little races about Sweatenham, and conversant with the way of the turf—the humble follower of Mr. Meggs, one of the grooms in Lord Weatherby's stable, and quite certain to be plucked for his "Little-go."

Jack Asgill, the only son of the widow of a naval captain—who was living at a little cabin by the seaside dignified by the name of a cottage—was the champion on the river, a fine, bold-spirited fellow, the leader of all the athletic sports of the college, a universal favourite, but very little calculated to wear the clergyman's gown for which his mother designed him, that he might get the benefice which a friend of his father's had promised her. Each half, the poor lady strained her eyes over the printed report of Jack's collegiate efforts.

"General Progress: M."

"What is 'M.', John, my dear?"

"'M.'? Oh, 'M.' means moderate. There's 'V. G.' and 'G.' are better; but 'B.' is worse, and 'V.B.' very bad. So, you see, I'm rather high, mother."

He is rewarded with a grateful smile, and a kiss on his sun-burnt cheek.

"Boarding-house Report," she goes on, "is, I see—'Unsatisfactory.' Oh, John, my love, I'm so grieved. How is that? I'm so sorry——"

"There now, don't be a dear old goose of a *mater*. That's old Snell; no one cares for that. It is all because we had a tremendous jolly supper-party the night before we came away, and some fellow threw a bolster at Snell. He thought it was me, and so down he pops me—the spiteful beast—as 'unsatisfactory.' Really, mother, that means nothing at all. Look at my place in school, and see."

"Class Master's Report," she goes on: "He might do better—moved up a division in his half."

Jack meets her inquiring glance with an easy smile. "There, isn't that first-rate? Moved up a division, mother, eh!"

"Yes; but, my boy, 'he might do better.' How is that?"

"Oh, of course, I might have moved up to the very top, if I could. You must remember, dear mother mine, that I had the deuce of a cold from that wetting I got" (the outrigger upset with him on the river) "just before the examination. And nothing pleases old Mouldy Bill—that's the name we give Venables, who has the class I'm in—he's such an awful clever chap himself. Read on, mother; it's a jolly report this time, I can tell you."

The confiding mamma continues: "Place in class of twenty-seven boys—sixteenth."

"There! sixteenth! I'm above eleven fellows. Tibbs, who is two years older, is below me; and all the other chaps are first-rate. I was nineteenth, you remember, last half."

Mrs. Asgill sighs gently and coughs for fear Jack would think she was at all disappointed. "Greek—B. 'B.' is bad, John, is it not?"

"That's Mouldy Bill again, mother. I hate Greek anyway; but it was a horrid chouse to give me a B., for I did my Euripides first rate."

"Latin—B.," she reads and pauses, whilst Jack breaks out, triumphantly—"Yes; but I was 'V. B.' last half; and Flack swears I've got on famously. I will be sure of 'G.,' or maybe, 'V. G.,' next half."

"Mathematics—V.B.," Mrs. Asgill gulps out, with a quaver in her tone indicative of great concern. "I always heard mathematics were highly necessary for a clergyman, and that you can't get into Cambridge without them."

"Then, darling mother, you are quite wrong. It's classics you want for the Church; anyway, I know more mathematics than old Flack, who is a clergyman; and Snell can't do a proposition in Euclid, and they say he'll get a bishopric somewhere abroad very soon. The sooner the better, say I; for our grub is beastly. I'm half-starved."

This was a masterly stroke, for it led Mrs. Asgill at once away to the question of dietary, and her face grew wan with alarm as she detected in the sinewy frame of her son evident traces of Snell's stinginess in the matter of beef and mutton.

I didn't know all this about the boys at the time, but I heard plenty of such stories after I was a few days at the college; and I saw, too, that some of the hardest-working fellows were those who had least need to provide for themselves in life.

Prayers came at last. He who knows the secrets of all hearts

can judge how many knelt before Him with any thought of asking for grace and protection, or of what Snell was thinking as he jerked out in a snappish, irritable way the words of the College Litany. Then we trooped off to the dormitories, and went through the form of going to bed; but when the lights had been out in my room for half an hour, I heard the scraping of a match, and Rundle, my next neighbour, summoned me to the banquet which I had provided.

"We have it in the kitchen, so as Snell mayn't hear us. We've tipped Dowly and Cookey with two 'bob' a-piece of your tin. Put on your jacket. Follow me. Mum's the word—as light as you can." And putting his bit of candle in a tiny dark lantern which he took from his box, Rundle led me along the passage, the eye of light preceding him, and the whole transaction having that semblance of burglary which made it very agreeable to my comrade, famous as he was for his acquaintance with the deeds of "Three-fingered Jack," "Dick Turpin," and the heroes of the *Newgate Calendar*. I knew it was all wrong. I did not care for the supper; but I was too weak to resist; and many of us are led astray, not because we like to take the wrong path, but because we are not strong enough to shake off the hand which is guiding us.

It was a banquet indeed! The kitchen gas was a-light, the large table covered with a cloth that had seen some service upstairs, a grand array of tin pannikins and plates, and a miscellaneous display of edibles, in which a large pie, a pile of tarts, hot sausages, and a cold fowl, were conspicuous. Bottles of ginger and currant wine were mingled with pots of marmalade and jam. The guests were all assembled, mostly big boys I had seen at the upper end of the room, and took not the slightest notice of me; the kitchen door was shut carefully. Rundle surveyed the table as he took his place, and pointed to a seat on the bench.

"How is this, Winter," he asked in a low tone of displeasure, "no oysters? I wouldn't give a farthing for a supper without oysters."

"Most votes carried, Possy!" (my friend was *præpositus* of a class, and was generally addressed by this familiar name). "Pat's money was very little, you know; and there's such a jolly lot of cholera about, lobsters are awful cheap. Look at these five I got from Finn's for six and sixpence, cracked and cut up so as not to make a row."

Rundle was amenable to argument, and with an injunction not to make a clatter with the plates, and to talk low, the feast began. It must be admitted that a boy's enjoyment of the pleasures of the

table is not dependent on agreeable society or brilliant conversation. He eats and drinks for the sake of himself, not of his company ; and silence rather enhances than diminishes his zest. And so, serious as savages, we sat and revelled in large platefuls of incongruous meats and in beakers of dreadful drinks, regardless of the morrow, and quite content with our enforced abstinence from an interchange of ideas. Everything was said in whispers. "Nubbles, I say, what a chouse you are ; that's the last Banbury ; you had two before." "Pass the marmalade this way, and a sweet biscuit." If any sound above a whisper was heard, Dowly, who was thrown out as a vidette in the passage in his nightshirt, so that he might pretend he was coming to see what was the matter if Snell operated a descent on us, appeared with a pale face at the door and uplifted finger, and hissed out, "I say ; now then, he's a-turnin' in bed, I can tell you. I heerd that laughing quite plain through the door, so I did."

These interruptions and admonitions could not damp the enjoyment, which was at any rate not protracted ; for in an amazingly short space of time the bottles were drained, the lobsters were but shells, the fowls but bones, the cheese but rind, the jam pots emptied. The assembly of Sybarites broke up, and one by one filtered through the doorway and glided away to their rooms, to face the horrors of nightmare or to sleep in peace, according to their digestions ; and as I followed Rundle, who closed the rear, I saw Dowly ravaging among the dishes, and searching in vain for any satisfactory remnant of the feast.

Our breakfast was very like the tea of the previous night. It was a wonder to me to see the composed, innocent look of the young fellows in chapel, and above all, the guileless look of Rundle, who, as one of the choir, wore a white surplice ; I knew that some of them, at all events, had been sitting up till all hours, with their heads up the chimney in their rooms, smoking, and that Rundle had gone off with a bottle of the college grocer's sherry and another of brandy under his arm, and had not retired to bed till daybreak. The array of masters in their gowns, the awful presence of Moody himself—a large sleek man, with black eyes and heavy beetling eyebrows, and a sallow face—impressed me immensely. I repented greatly of my rashness in venturing to look at him earnestly, for he suddenly caught my eye, and stared at me with an expression so severe and tremendous, that I felt quite weak about the knees, and blushed till my ears tingled.

The service was over, and we marched from the chapel to the main building to the sound of a funereal bell. The head of the column passed through the arched door, and as my turn came I

saw two of the boys at each side with pencil and paper engaged in ticking off the names. As I walked in one of them asked me sharply for my name.

"Oh, Brady? You are to go in to Dr. Moody at once, d'ye hear? Room A. Now then, sharp, Paddy."

The hum of voices sounded in my ears like the rushing of waters; and twice I put my hand on the door and withdrew it, for somehow or other I fancied the black-eyed, stern-faced man knew of our doings, and would visit on me all the sins of the night's dissipation. At last I was inside the dreaded portal and face to face with the doctor, who was standing at his desk looking over the exercises of the upper form, young men rather than boys, who were going up to the University. He saw but took no notice of me, and went on with his examination of the papers before him, whilst I underwent a different examination from the young gentlemen who were awaiting the results of his criticism.

What the deuce were they laughing at? I could not see anything to laugh at. They did; for neither the cut of my jacket nor my boots, nor the colour of my tie, nor my pantaloons, were familiar to these young Brummels, who had no idea of the fashions prevailing at Kilmoyle, or knew that Andy Kane, the tailor, took all his designs from the plates in "The Magazine of Taste."

Dr. Moody raised his head and beckoned me to approach.

"Your guardian tells me," he said, "you were considered by Dr. Ball to have made fair progress. Dr. Ball is a good scholar—in fact, for one of the alumni of the Silent Sister, he may be termed an elegant and accomplished scholar; and his edition of 'Bion'—a pretty trifle—is known to us over here. What were you reading when you left?"

I stammered through my list.

"Hum!—that sounds very fairly; quite up to our fourth form. Now, Brady, let me hear you read and translate. Begin there."

The passage in Juvenal which Dr. Moody pointed out to me was one I knew tolerably well; and, with confidence somewhat restored, I began to read aloud as I was desired. Before the second line was well begun I was aware of a titter among the Brummels, which soon became a roar of laughter, as Dr. Moody, with his hands to his ears, exclaimed—"There, there!—that will do! Such quantity! Dear me, how very dreadful! We must set at work at once on this!"

In fact, my pronunciation was of the broadest—or of the flattest Continental—type, and my prosody was feeble. I was much ashamed; and when I was called on to read a chorus from the

"Phœnissæ," and was greeted with fresh merriment in my Greek, I felt inclined to throw down the book or fling it at some fellow's head.

It was the foretaste of my persecutions. Another boy would have got through the ordeal well enough, but as I was obstinately bent on having my own way, and in doing battle with all comers, I soon had my hands full of quarrels and fights. My morbid feeling was increased, perhaps, by the want of a friend. Mr. Bates was far away. It seemed as if I were quite alone in the world,—abandoned to my fate among a crowd of pitiless mocking strangers, who exerted every ingenuity to irritate and annoy me.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FLIGHT.

"I REALLY do not know whether we can overlook this subordinate and quarrelsome spirit much longer," said Dr. Moody. "You are never happy except you are engaged in personal conflicts—one of those 'in bello gaudentes, prælio ridentes.'"

"They will not let me alone, sir—they are always at me."

"At you, sir?—at you? What do you mean by that? Here have you been reported for fighting with Ricketts, Botcher, Wylie primus, the two Crawleys, within this quarter—not to speak of your boarding-house squabbles."

"There are more than those, sir. You only hear when I have the best of the fight. You don't know that I have been licked by ever so many of the big fellows, because I won't stand their making game of me."

"It is a dreadful spirit!" ejaculated the principal—"a dreadful spirit—a word and a blow. You have, I find, received corporal punishment about once a week, and have had the most severe impositions, and yet you persist in these encounters."

"If I were to be killed on the spot, or to die, sir, I cannot help it. Why are they allowed to persecute me—to ridicule, and sneer, and jibe at me? I've borne it as long as I could. Some of the fellows have left off, but others will not; and if you could only know how I am tried you would punish my tormentors, and not me."

"You say you have been fighting with the senior boys, and have been beaten—who were they?"

"I cannot tell you, sir. Some of them had black eyes as well as I had."

"Black eyes ! why it's your invariable condition, sir. It is disgraceful to the college. I will promise you this : bring up before me any boy who annoys you without a cause, and I will inquire into the case and inflict on him condign punishment, if he deserves it. You may go ; the last five hundred lines are condoned."

I went forth from the presence with a burning sense of wrong. In that hard time Mrs. Prince had been my only comforter.

"What ! another black eye ?" the good matron would exclaim, "and the yellow scarcely gone off the last one yet. That's near two pounds of raw beef I've had to pay for out of my private pocket. Why, it's no eyes you'll have at all very soon, you dreadful Brady."

The poor soul had some Hibernian tendencies herself—they stopped short of black eyes—but her encounters with Mrs. Snell, and Dobbs, the cook, and Grimes, the head chambermaid, were frequent and stormy.

It was on the evening of the day I had been in to Dr. Moody—hang these doctors, my life is weary of them !—I was working away at my desk. Dowly came in with a tray full of letters to Snell, who examined each before he called up the boy for whom it was intended. We all knew the postman's ring, and every eye was directed to the desk.

"Has Jones got his tip, I wonder ?" "There's a black seal for Kimmis ; his governor's been seedy." "Look at little Mac ! he's got a post-office order, and a lot of stamps."

"Brady ?" called out Snell. "Two letters—one from India, with a shilling to pay."

I walked up to the desk. There was a letter with a large black seal ; it was from Mr. Bates. There was another in a clear sharp handwriting, which made me start as I took it up.

I went back to my seat. I looked at the last letter again and again. With hesitating hand I tore it open, and read :—

"Auripore, June 10th, 18—.

"MY DEAR SON,—I write to you in the hope that you have not quite forgotten you have a mother. Some day when we meet I will tell you, my dear son, why I thought it best for your welfare that I should not cast any part of the burthen of my sad fate upon you ; and no doubt you have been taught to hate me, and have been told I did not care for you. My dear Terence, I will not say a word against your grandfather. He was your dear papa's father, and he took a strong part against

me because I made the greatest sacrifice that a woman could make for his son and for you ; but I have never ceased to think of you and to love you. Though so far away, I have taken care of you as well as I could. My servant used to tell me about you : and when he was sent away I had friends who took care to let me know of your welfare. I cannot tell you how I suffered when the news came that you were drowned ; but that was soon set to rights. I was very sorry, too, indeed, when I heard of my father-in-law's death, though he was not kind to me. I am told you are growing tall and strong, and that you are very like your father. I am glad to hear that ; for I have been unhappy about you. You are my son, and by your father's wishes I was to take charge of you ; but I was not able then, and I only live now to see you and show how your poor mother loves you. I cannot leave this country, for I have no money, and live on the kindness of my friends ; but I trust you will be able some day to help me. You are going into the army, and you must come out to India ; and then we will return together, and live together always. You will be a very rich man some day. Look after your property, and do not believe any one who tells you there is not a fortune belonging to your grandfather. I principally write to warn you against the Desmonds. Your poor father told me long ago that the Desmonds had taken all the lands of the Brady family. I have been told that the brother of Mr. Denis Desmond is a great man in Ireland, and that he is your guardian, along with a low Irish attorney. I would come over and shield you against them if I could ; but I want you to promise your mother not to sign any paper, or to do anything about your property without letting me know first. The Desmonds feel they have got our property unjustly. They are all as cunning as serpents. I am told there is a niece of Mr. Desmond's—a Miss Butler—who is to have all the money. She lives near you, and it is said they will try to make you marry her ; and, in that case, the Desmonds would get the estates. Of course, you are too young yet, but these bad people look a long way ahead. I am dying to hear from you. I will tell you why you have not heard from me before, some day. Believe me, it was for your good. When you write direct to me, 'Mrs. Brady'—you have been taught, perhaps, to think I have no right to the name—'care of Messrs. Colville and Arbuthnot, Madras.' With tears in my eyes, I sign myself,

"Your loving mother,

"MARY BRADY."

I read this long letter again and again. The prayer-bell

roused me from my study of every line. Why did she write to me now? Why had she been silent for years? Were all these warnings against secret machinations devised to deprive me of some unknown rights? As I read "Miss Butler's" name, and the words, "they will try to make you marry her," my cheek flushed, and I felt a little fluttering of my heart.

"How little can she know the truth!" I sighed. Marry Mary Butler! Have you not been told the truth of this hapless mother of yours? See how she seeks to arouse your suspicions of your friends! Are you not unhappy and suspicious now? Remember your grandfather's last injunctions; stern and cruel as they were, it is plain they were just. No, Terence; steel your heart. The day will come when you will see her face to face. Then you can hear and judge for yourself. If she loved you so she would not leave you in your solitude and sorrow.

Prayers were over. These reflections were my prayer.

"And may Heaven have mercy on her and have pity on me!" closed them, as I rose from my knees.

We trooped off to our rooms. My mother's letter was next my heart. I had not read the other yet, but I put my end of candle on my trunk by the side of my cot, and opened it. It ran as follows:—

"Dublin, —."

"DEAR TERENCE,—I am sorry to say that there is no cheering intelligence to give you about Lough-na-Carra. The country is in a dreadful state, and no money is to be had at all. McTurk & Skinner, who are, you may remember, attorneys for that lady in India, have oddly enough turned up as solicitors for an English mortgagee who wants his money. In fact, I fear Sweatenham College is too expensive for us, and you must make up your mind to leave at Christmas.

"The lady I speak of has been playing some of her pranks again. She is in the hands of some smart fellows, and she has served the trustees with notice that she has equitable claims in her own and her son's name on Lough-na-Carra, which she intends to substantiate; and, actually she is going, she declares, to try Sir Richard's title to Kilmoyle by a writ of ejectment. I beg of you to enter on no correspondence with her, as I hear she intends to try and use you for her purposes. Remember your grandfather's advice, and his last request that evening! I believe he was right.

"Yours ever,

"A. BATES."

"Now, then, you Paddy-whack! Put out your dip, will you!"

growled a great Jewish-looking fellow, named Morris, from the next bed. "Out at once, do you hear, Mr. Potato! What's the use of your reading letters from people who can't spell?"

Mrs. Prince brought in a large piece of beefsteak for Mr. Morris next morning. It was not cooked.

There were one thousand lines of the "Odyssey" for me. I made up my mind that night.

"Here's four pound nine and sixpence; it was all I could get," said Dowly. I had now ascertained his name was Pluckley, but the Greek vocative of "slavey" had become the general way of addressing him. "The watch was one pound fifteen, and the clothes were only two pounds. I couldn't get more than a quid for all the books; the rest's for my commission, you know. You can give a good supper out of it!"

Whilst the house-boys were in the playground and I was in "The Study," as it was called, engaged, as it was supposed, on my never-ending task of writing out lines, I was preparing a short letter to Mr. Bates. I told him the story of my sufferings. I was sorry to grieve him, but I could do nothing dishonourable; I could not bear to trouble my friends. It would be better to let Lough-na-Carra go altogether. He could sell off everything except the portraits, and a few things my grandfather prized. I would write to him as soon as I had made up my mind, and had got something to do. And so, bathing the letter with tears—I knew not why they fell—I sealed up my letter and put it in my pocket.

There were three fellow-victims with me, biting the ends of their pens or scribbling away, and at intervals looking up at the open windows and envying the sparrows which twittered on the branches of the old elm-tree outside.

"If any one asks," said I, "say I am gone for a walk."

"By Jove, Brady, won't you catch it if your imposition's not done this time!" squeaked little Tyrwhitt *secundus*. "You're too plucky by half!"

"Well, I dare say I shall catch it, if they catch me. Good-bye."

I walked along the passage, opened the door into the garden, and in another minute was out in the lane which led to the street. There were the secret police of the college to be evaded if I got out of bounds; but I knew Sweatenham well by this time, and turning down a cross street, I struck out on the high road to London. I shied my trencher over a hedge, took my cricket-cap from under my jacket, and walked along at a fair pace towards Todley station. I knew there would be an up-train in half an

hour, and I could just catch it. As I live there is "Sweet William," our itinerant confectioner, coming towards me! I owe him three shillings.

"You're out for a spree, I 'spose, Mr. Brady? Thank you, sir. No change! Well, that is handsome. I wish you'd tell Mr. Rundle I must have the half-sovereign he got of me. It's ruination to deal with some of you young gentlemen; it is, indeed. Lor' bless you! I won't say a word of seeing you. Good evening, master."

The rail was on my right. I heard far off the whistle of the engine leaving Sweetenham; and soon the rattle of the train came along with the breeze. It was a hard race. How the black speck and its cloud of steam grew on me as I ran and looked over my shoulder! Puff! puff! puff! every breath seemed to pant over me. The station is close at hand—the bell is ringing—a country cab, with a pile of luggage and an old lady and children inside, all with eager faces turned to the train, are driving up, the driver whipping the reeking horse.

"'Ma, there's Master Brady, of Snell's."

It is one of the horrid offspring of Mrs. Mather, the wife of the college-porter.

I put on a tremendous spirt—bounded in through the door as the porter was closing it—heard a cry of despair from Mrs. Mather and the children.

"Second-class to London."

"No second-class, this train. First-class from Todley to London. Now, sir, be quick!"

The bell rang; with another bound I was on the platform, leaped into a carriage as the guard's whistle blew, and in a minute more, as I sat wiping my forehead, the die was cast. The express-train was rattling onwards to London. My companions stared at me; a stately old woman, whose novels I had disturbed—a young gentleman, her son, on whose foot I had trodden—a pretty little girl dozing in the corner. The latter just looked up; I was certainly not the ideal of her doze, for she closed her eyes again. The stately old lady was very restless. In my inadvertent haste I had selected the seat next the door which was opposite to her also; and so, after a minute, she said, "Alfred, would you mind asking this young gentleman to move his feet a little farther back; these carriages are so narrow."

Alfred looked at me severely. My poor feet had crept like mice under the seat, and had not crept out again ere she spoke.

"Alfred, would you see if I have not left one of my books on that seat."

I had hopped up and left the seat void and open for inspection ere the sentence was finished.

But the stately old lady, who was, I discovered, the wife not the mother of Alfred (and why he sat at the opposite corner in face of the sleeping girl was what I could not understand), resolved on war. I was very hot from my race; the carriage was like a green-house. She called on Alfred to ask me to put up the window. Then Alfred had to move a great many cloaks and straps and cases from the net over my head, and brought his waistcoat-buttons very close to my nose. Never was there such an indefatigable old stateliness in adjusting herself. Her little skeleton foot was a beauty which could not be destroyed by age, and so it was in a constant state of flourish. She dropped innumerable small articles upon me, and glanced at me angrily as if I were the cause of their falling.

On sped the train, oscillating at the curves and jumping at the stations, where we caught a phantasm of faces and figures, running into a mass of eyes and coats and dresses, like the visions of a nightmare; and at each swing and roll and rock of the carriages, the lady gave a little cry and clasped her hands as if for mercy. It was intolerable. After a long run of an hour the train stopped at Dinswin. There was a row of young ladies in curls behind a counter dressed with Banbury tarts, cheesecakes, sandwiches and preserves under glass-cases; busy waiters, hovering about round tables laden with quaint soups and such generous fare as suits the taste of the travelling Briton in his own land. I escaped from the stately and active old lady. Ere the bell rang I had marked a vacant seat in a carriage far away, and had ensconced myself in a corner. No one disturbed me as the train moved on, for my only fellow-passenger remained asleep in one of the corners opposite.

I tried to think out some plan as we whirled on, but my thoughts wandered into cloudland. I counted my money—two pounds, a crown-piece, three shillings, and a halfpenny. What was I going to do? I did not know. Had I not read of many poorer than I who had made their fortune once they were bold enough to seek it in the wide wide world? Was there no Brother Cheeryble who would take pity on a poor lad as he gazed earnestly on a windowful of advertisements? Was there no fortune left for a youngster who had faith and courage, and a desire to work for life and honour?

London was before me! There was bread to be won and honour to be gained yet. I would not tax the kindness of my friends; I would leave Lough-na-Carra to the care of those who would see I suffered no wrong in my absence, and then from some

distant land I would return with untold gold and a proud name to retrieve the fortunes of my house. I would wander to India and seek out the repentant woman, who would cast herself into my arms and drown my reproaches in her tears. We should all be happy! Far away in my reverie, as the Alpine village is seen from the hill-top by the weary traveller, indistinct in the evening shadows, and yet the goal to which he is tending, there was that to which I could scarce give form and substance. Would she welcome me when I returned to lay all the rewards of my toil and long-suffering at her feet? How can I tell with what bliss my dreams survived the ordeals through which my fancy delighted to lead me?

Here was I, a runaway from school—a fretful, angry, disappointed boy, and yet in my reverie I was a prince in fairy-land, scattering largesse all about the world and Lough-na-Carra and Kilmoyle. Would I change with that youngster opposite whose valet came to the window when we stopped, to ask “my lord” if he needed anything; and who evidently wondered what a schoolboy in a cap and jacket, and without even a railway wrapper, could be doing with his face flattened against the glass of the carriage. I do not know if I would have exchanged my dreams for any reality short of their full fruition. Would I have accepted even the ideal I dreamed of as the full satisfaction of my hopes and the end of all my aspirations?

We flew along through the night; the screech of the steam was scaring the night-owls. There was suddenly a cry which broke through my dreams. The carriage groaned under the rigour of the brakes. My companion’s head was out of the window.

“There’s something wrong, I think,” he said. “A smash of some kind at the end of the train.”

With many groans and screams, the engine whistling all the while, the train, shaking like a living creature in mortal agony, halted at last. There was a tramp of feet, a flashing of lights, voices crying, “Guard! what is the matter?—is there any danger?”

“By Gad! I say, there *is* a smash,” repeated my lord, and leaped out at his side of the carriage. I followed him. Down in the dark the lamps were glaring, and then arose a tumult as of an agitated crowd. The citizens of the moving world had been roused by the crash as when an earthquake summonses the sleepers to death. Swarming from the carriages they came forth and thronged the narrow line. Above cries of alarm and terror rose through the night air the moan of the engine, and the fierce hissing of the steam. Alas! what a sight it was. The carriage

I had left was the last but one. Turning a curve in a steep embankment, the coupling which held it and the van had broken. There was a pile of broken wood and ironwork heaped up against the bank of earth.

In the midst of all that ruin there were the dying and the dead. I stood staring vacantly at the shapeless destruction before me. Am I an evil genius? Do I sow misery and death in my path? I was pushed aside by strong men. When I heard the guard explain—"Will any one run to Langley, and give the alarm?—straight up the line, nigh four miles away!" I was off like a deer, and outstripped my rivals in the race. I was glad to escape from the horrid scene. I had seen the fair young girl drawn forth. Oh! let me not dwell on it. I ran through the night, fast by the roadside along by the embankment, from which I could see lights in houses far away, where perhaps there was mirth, and happiness, and revel; through deep cuttings, into which the stars alone shone from above; through a dark, dripping tunnel, filled with the vapours of the night, in which my footsteps echoed along the vaulted roof. Once or twice I passed men at crossings, or seated by their fires, and startled them as I ran by, panting, with scarce voice enough to cry out—"An awful accident. Help! help! Down the line"—and so ran on. My feet tripped on beams, on bars of iron, on sleepers and heaps of ballast. I was on my legs again regardless of bleeding hands and feet. On and on, and still no town in sight—no glare of lamps—no sign of succour; but on a sudden turn there came in view an array of lights, green and red, and the gas burning cheerily along the station platform. I sped along with a fresh effort. There was no one on the platform. Crying out, "Help! help!" as I ran, I passed door after door, till a handle yielded, and I was in a blaze of light—the first-class waiting-room, with its listless or sleepy occupants, waiting for the London train. I could scarce speak; the place appeared to whirl round me. "For Heaven's sake—Help!—Help! A dreadful accident!—Bishopshope! four miles away." I was faint and bleeding; I had eaten but little that day, and had husbanded my little store. I saw terrified eyes glaring upon me; I heard voices—a hundred questions. There was a cry, "Get him wine! Send for a surgeon!" I remember no more.

There was a stranger sitting by my bedside, when I recovered my senses. I was in a strange room, neat, and clean, and small; a dapper little maid, with her hair tucked under a white cap, held a cup in one hand, and a candle in the other, close to the bed. The stranger had his fingers on my wrist, and removed them.

"He's all right ; no lesion of any consequence. I must go off to assist at once. You may give him some beef-tea or soup in an hour or so ; and I will come to see how he is in the morning."

I was wide awake ; one hand was bound up ; I felt a bandage on my knee ; but otherwise I was only conscious of a great desire to eat.

"Tell, me, sir, if you please, are many people injured ?"

"We fear so. Telegraph reports some fatal cases. Thank your stars you have escaped. Good-bye for the present, and keep quiet, and get a good night's sleep."

The little maid stood still.

"What have you got there, please, Mary ?"

"Physic. My name's Anne, not Mary."

"Well, Anne, will you, if you please, throw away that physic, or keep it for the doctor. I am starving. Tell me where I am, who you are, and if I can get anything to eat, and what time it is, and all about the accident."

"Why, it's only ten minutes or so since you scared the first-class waiting-room. Mrs. Pitcher, in the bar, hasn't come to herself yet. Every one in Langley's gone off to Bishopshope. The train from London arrived just after Mr. Stock, the doctor, came, and they've all gone to the place."

"But where is this ?"

"The Station Hotel, to be sure. I'm the second chambermaid. Mrs. Jolly, our first, is looking after beds, and hot water, and things, for it will be a heavy night for us. Dear me, I'm quite afeared to think when the trains do come in. All your clothes is spoiled ; but we must wait till the luggage comes for a change."

"Anne, I'm dreadfully hungry."

"The doctor said you was to have chicken broth, or the like of that, in an hour."

"I tell you I shall die. I fainted, I suppose, from want of something to eat. Can't you, Anne ?—do get me something ; and do—do at once !"

The little maid nodded her head and laughed.

"Thank you, Anne."

In a little time she came in, bearing a tray with half a cold fowl, and a small decanter of sherry, and put it on the bed. I perceived for the first time I could not use my hand. Anne saw the state of the case at once. She cut up the fowl for me, and smiled and nodded her head at every morsel I took, helped me to wine, raised her plump hands in wonder when I asked for more,

and with a "Well, I never!" and a pleasant laugh of wonder, trotted off for fresh supplies, and repeated the process.

There came the slow measured puff of an engine; the station bell rang, and was answered by all the bells in the hotel. Little Anne turned very pale.

"*They're come,*" she said. "This is the third time we've had *them* here. I do dread it, to be sure. But I must go now. The waiters are back, and if you want anything in the night, one will come."

I could not rest; I got up and listened. There were heavy feet moving slipshod, as if carrying burthens; there were cries and moans of agony; doors were shut and opened. The night was awful. How could I sleep, and think that close to me were those in mortal agony, expecting Death, the Comforter? But I crept back to my room at last and closed my eyes.

Mr. Stock found me quite well, all but a cut hand and knees, in the morning. Two persons were killed—one, the girl who sat in the corner, and who was going up to meet her father, an officer returning from India; the other an aged clergyman, journeying to London to thank a friend for the gift of a preferment. Four passengers were so hurt that their lives were in great danger; and ten had received contusions and injuries more or less serious. There was a coroner's inquest; and there was to be a Government inquiry; and I was to be examined, for my activity was spoken of, and it was supposed I could depose whether the guard, and the driver, and the stoker were drunk or sober, cool or collected; whether the signalman at Bishopshope was on his post, and many particulars of the kind, as to which I had not the smallest knowledge.

Langley next day was full of mourners, of grief-stricken, anxious relatives and friends. The doctors were busy—the local men swarming in and out—the great London Lamas coming in state in special trains, and flying back again. The inquest was over. I told all I knew. When I gave my name and address, Sweatenham College, the coroner looked grave.

"You will observe, gentlemen, the witness is absent from the college, as I happen to know, for my son is there—in Term time without leave, and he is Irish. We must be cautious."

The coroner seemed to imply that I was somehow implicated in causing the accident.

I had been cross-examined at great length, till I thought some one must entertain doubts whether the poor people were killed at all. I left the room in which the ancient institution of the realm was holding its 'quest, careless of their decision, for it was

little matter to me whom they found guilty. An unfamiliar voice pronounced my name. Looking round I saw a young man whom I had observed in the room busily engaged in taking notes, and who was much talked at by the coroner and by Mr. Maws, the company's solicitor, who was striving to make out that the accident was a natural result of railway travelling.

He was a good-looking, pleasant young fellow, of two or three and twenty, stoutly built, of the middle size, with curly head and light-brown whiskers, and was dressed in rather extravagant colours—a bright olive frock coat, blue cravat with diamond pin, grey trousers, and patent leather boots.

"I hope you will excuse me for the liberty, but may I ask when you are going up to town? My name is Standish—Staples Standish, and I am down here reporting the case for the *Hercules*; but I am going up by the next train, and if you'll pardon me,"—he hesitated for a moment—"we might travel together. I want to ask you a few questions, if you'll be so good. They've brought in a verdict of 'Murder' against the engine-driver, the stoker, and the guard of the train, but no one minds coroners' juries' verdicts much."

I had just been thinking what I was to do for money. There was my hotel bill; there was my ticket to be paid for; I had only to go back to Sweatenham or write to Mr. Bates.

"I really don't know when I shall leave, or which way I am going, sir."

Mr. Standish stopped.

"That's odd, isn't it? You are very young, and of course I can't presume to offer an opinion; but it seems to me rather odd."

And so it did to me. I could not tell what I was doing, or what I intended to do. Naturalists tell us that the force which drives forth the birds of the air to cast themselves loose on the world is some sort of magnetic impulse, and that the creatures which speed over land and sea till they find rest, and fill our groves with songs of love and praise, are not conscious of their own efforts. How many fail in the way—how many, battling in vain with the storm, are swallowed up in the night-wave? I was like one of those birds—scarcely conscious of danger, I was flying I knew not where.

"The company, of course, will pay your hotel bill and railway fare, and make your parents full compensation, if required, for any injury you may have sustained," said Mr. Maws, who had sought me out on the platform as I was walking up and down with Mr. Standish. "We may require your evidence, so you'll favour me with your London address?"

"I have none—I know no one in London, except it be Sir Richard Desmond; or there's Captain Window, Royal Navy. He lives somewhere there too."

"Give me, if you like, in case your friends are not in town," said Mr. Standish. "You know my address, Maws—1, Old-court, Temple. What are the company going to stand for personal injuries to him, eh? Look at his hands and knees—cuts—contusions—loss of services.—There is matter for a parent or guardian to make money out of!" continued Mr. Standish. "I would not take less than £500 down if I were either of them for his injuries."

Mr. Maws smiled, and rubbed his hands.

"You gentlemen of the press are so very full of spirits! In case you are needed, sir, I will write to Sir Richard Desmond, whom I happen to know. Good morning, sir! Good morning, Mr. Standish. If you could say (*sotto voce*) that you know who attended to watch the case on behalf of the company, and with his usual tact, et cætera, et cætera—you understand me?—I should really be obliged. Good evening, and safe journey."

And Mr. Maws hurried back to his coroner and his jury.

"And so I would," continued Mr. Standish; "just make them pay through the nose. Why shouldn't you?"

"But I didn't get cut in the accident. It was in running for help afterwards——"

"All the same. If there had been no accident, there would have been no help needed; if no help had been needed you would not have been running for it! It is a clear case of constructive damages, as I would call them. No? Well, you are young and ingenuous. You won't take a lot of money when you can get it, and you are going to London to see people whose address you don't know—and you have got no luggage and no cash! It is quite a little adventure to meet you."

I turned away.

"I presume my actions are free—at least I intend them to be so."

"On my word, you wrong me if you fancy I meant to be critical or inquisitive. Pray do not think I was intrusive. I am half an Irishman myself; and when I heard your story I could not help thinking of a poor lad of your own age journeying up to London, too, some years ago, to look for friends whom he couldn't find; and I longed to be of help to you, knowing how friendless that lad was, and how much he would have given for a word of sympathy—ay, even for a look!"

He spoke earnestly, as he held out his hand, and the hard metallic ring had left his tongue.

I took his hand.

"Well," he said, "shall we go together? I don't want to know more than you like to tell me; but as I know 'the village,' I may be of use to you. *Andiam'! andiam'!*"

There was just time to bid little Anne good-bye and to write a line of thanks to the surgeon, ere the train came up.

Mr. Standish, who seemed to exercise great influence, and to know every one, buttonholed an official whom he called "Tunks," which set me wondering if he was related to the driver of the Kilmoyle coach, and got a coupé for himself and me. He produced an enormous pipe, and winking at the guard, who thought it necessary to inform him "it was against the rules," puffed out a cloud of smoke—"Oh, yes! so I have heard. If you warn me now, and find me smoking at the next station, it will be forty shillings. All right! Two minutes behind time, guard. We'll have another smash if you don't look sharp!"

I gave a little shudder. I thought of the poor sufferers who could not be moved in those sad little rooms. The train was moving on, and as I looked out of the window along the platform, I saw Mr. Bates running out of the Station Hotel towards the carriages. It was too late: he did not even see me.

"What do you see—the head master and all the police of Sweatenham, eh? You're safe for the present, anyway."

"No. It was actually my guardian. No doubt he has come to look after me. He has heard from Sweatenham, and perhaps he has seen my name in the accounts in the papers."

"Well, it can't be helped now. You will not be able to telegraph till we get to London, or, perhaps, not even then, as Langley may be closed. Now we will go to work; and if I ask you a question now and then, you won't mind, I hope?"

He produced a lamp out of his bag, fastened it to the cloth lining of the carriage, lighted it, and, opening a little book, began to write, balancing it on his hand, as the carriage rocked to and fro at express speed.

"Yes," he remarked; "this is all new to you—new to most people till they see it. Of the thousands who will read at their breakfast-tables to-morrow morning a full report of the proceedings of that coroner's jury so many miles away, not one, probably, will think how it has been produced. They fancy it comes of itself, like the leaves on the trees, I daresay. I won't be in bed till four in the morning. There's only one comfort I have—the editor will be up later than I!"

"London at last! Here we are, my young friend. It strikes me the best thing you can do is to take a shake down at my chambers. It's late, you know. They will scarcely like to take you in without luggage—a lad like you—at the hotel. 'Pon my word, it's the best thing you can do. Here, come along. Porter! a portmanteau, marked 'S,' from Langley. Get a cab; look sharp!"

I was standing amidst a rush of people. The train had burst like a shell and sent them forth. What could I do better?

"I thank you; but——"

"But me no buts, as they say on the stage; but come along."

The shops were all closed. The long lines of the lamps kept watch and ward along the streets. I looked out into the night, and wondered if there were any of those I saw flitting along as desolate as I felt. How little I knew! The bells were chiming for midnight.

"Do you hear? 'Turn again, runaway! Go back to Sweatenham!' Is that what they are saying? Well, you must have one day in London, at all events."

It seemed to me as if the streets and the guardian lights were filing on and on with us as we passed. My companion observed me in silence.

"Yes; you may well stare. That is a scene for a civilized Christian people—the envy of surrounding nations—to show to the world. That's the end of the Haymarket—the beginning and end of many a young gentleman about town," he said. "There is the chorus—'Murder! police!' Women screaming—men fighting—oaths and laughter. It's too early for the tide to run to its height yet."

The glare and the lights, and the tumult of voices—the straggling figures—the whirling crowd of men and women—passed away. In a few minutes more, threading a maze of monster carts, piled up with the spoils of the field, drawn up by the side of low colonnades, we passed down a narrow lane, then by a church, then under a grimy archway, and drew up at a dark grey, iron-knobbed gate. My companion got out and knocked. The gate slowly opened; and as I was wondering whether he was some great lord who was acting the part of the humble swain in Moore's ballad, he said—"Here we are in the Temple. Come along. Bring up the portmanteau, cabby. Top floor, 1, Old Court."

It was a great quadrangle surrounded by sombre walls with many doors and windows.

"This is our quarter," he said. "We are among bigwigs, I can tell you. Look! Do you see that name over the door—'Mr.

Twister'? That's Twister, Q.C. Great practice he has—ten thousand a year at least. There's Skittles, the parliamentary man. He makes as much. Next landing—up again ; and here we are."

He turned the key in a battered old black door, over which was written, "Mr. Torrington Grubb, Mr. H. Smith, Mr. W. H. Smith, Mr. Tredgold, Mr. Standish."

"There's a lot, isn't there?" he asked, smiling. "But we are not all in at present. They pay the rent and keep their names up. I am the monarch of all I survey. There's no one to dispute my right but the treasurer of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. Now then, cabby, put down that portmanteau. I want to go on to the *Hercules* office. I'll be down in a minute. Mind your head against that doorway. Look out for the step—all right. And here we are."

I had been led through a small passage, and found myself in a large, low-roofed room, surrounded with book-shelves and old prints. A round table, covered with papers, and letters, and books, stood in the centre ; and three easy chairs, an old sofa, and a reading-desk, completed the furniture. Over the chimney-piece was a very sombre looking-glass, stuck full of old cards, bills, and letters. The chimney-piece was garnished with pipes of clay and meerscham ; above it were sets of foils, masks, and boxing-gloves.

Standish opened a door and let me get a glimpse of a tiny bedroom, from which he emerged with a pile of blankets and a pillow.

"Now," he said, as he arranged them on the sofa, "I install you in full possession, to have and to hold as long as you like—your bed is ready inside. You will find everything that luxury can suggest or wealth procure in that cupboard ; you can take the goods the gods provide you, aided by the goddess of Plenty, Mrs. Chandler. This is the key of the wine, which is the only thing I dare not trust to my deity, for if I did she would leave me poor indeed. There are more books than you can read to-night ; there is a boot-jack. If you hear a noise in the morning don't mind it ; I shall be coming in at all hours. We will get a fellow to look at your cuts in the morning. Sleep well—good night."

And with a cheerful laugh he closed the door ; I heard his light step bounding down-stairs past Twister, Q.C., and then all was silent.

It was to little purpose I sat and thought, for my mind wandered away to the past, and then dwelt on the impossible project, which I scarcely could shape to my own mind. In that profound solitude I could not believe I was in London. I went to the

window ; there was a faint streak of light in the sky ; spires innumerable ; a forest of steeples and chimney-pots ; a great dome rising to the sky, on the summit of which a ball and cross were warming into colour ; a grey, cold stream, on which black barges floated away past the angle of the walls which bounded my view. These grew out of a shadowy background, and that was all. It might be a dream of a city of the old and bygone world, in some occult desert. Hark ! there is a sound at last. It is a song—a very husky sort of vocalization, joyous withal. It echoes through the court below, and as it comes nearer, “ We won’t go home till morning ! we won’t go home till morning ! ” Well, go home now. It is morning already. The sparrows twitter in the eaves and in the trees which uplift their leafy honours round the walls of brick : their day’s work is before them. The growing light as it strengthens struggles with the smoky arms raised from their chimney cradles to smother it. As I lay down on the stranger’s bed I felt I had consigned him to the ancient sofa ; and thanking heaven for its mercies, I felt thankful too that in this waste so full of life I was not quite cut off from human sympathy.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW I BEGIN TO FIND I AM MISTAKEN.

“ **A**ND so you slept well ? ” exclaimed Standish, as we sat at breakfast ; “ I am glad to hear it ; and I kept you company ; but I was half inclined to wake you up to punish your disobedience, when I saw you had taken my sofa, and did not go to bed as I ordered you. Look ; just twelve o’clock ! We were both tired—Another slice of tongue ? No. Mrs. Chandler, you may clear away, and then go over and ask Mr. Chick to step across here. I’ll smoke a pipe whilst you tell me your plans—if you like, that is—and we’ll see if I can be of any use to you. I have nothing to do till five o’clock, when I must go to Hall, to add a dinner more to my legal qualifications for the outer bar. There is ‘ no house ’ to-night, and I vote we go to some place to spend the evening, when you get some clothes to appear in.”

“ There is a great difficulty about telling you my plans, Mr. Standish, because I have none.”

“ Then we must form some. A man or a boy without a plan for the day or the year before him is like a ship without a rudder : it’s odds if he ever reaches any port. He veers about on the ocean of

life, goes down at last in a storm, or is lost on some rugged coast. Why did you come to London? You must have come for some purpose?"

"Why, the truth is, I got weary of Sweatenham. I was always in fights—the fellows laughed at me so. I did not like to weary my guardian with complaints, and I thought I would just bolt away and see if I could not do something for myself."

"Ah! doing something for one's self. That is a fatal phrase when it means nothing—or nothing definite. Now look at me: I am as friendless a poor devil as ever lived. My father was ruined when I was a child, and died soon after my mother, who could not bear to witness his poverty. I was brought up at my grandfather's in Scotland. He was a kindly Scot enough; but he hated my father. His own mother was Irish, but he never could quite forgive his daughter for marrying one of the country. When he died, we discovered he had, with all his Scottish caution, been living on the interest of a large sum he supposed to be invested securely; whilst the rascally writer had been wasting it in speculations, and merely paid him the imaginary dividends. There was I at seventeen dependent on a poor old lady with grand notions and habits, and three aunts who had done their best to spoil me. There was just enough for them to starve on in decency, and of course I had to look out for myself. I was near enlisting; but one morning I saw a fellow through the palings of the barrack outside the town where we lived getting a flogging. I thought with horror of a life spent with such men as I saw swarming about the lowest public-houses in the lowest streets of the city. I turned from the army. Then I was too big to enter the navy even if I had had any one with interest to get me into the service. And the merchant sailors I saw did not give me the idea that they would be nice companions for life either. Am I boring you?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Standish, indeed you are not! Pray go on." I was listening, indeed, with the greatest interest, for here I was face to face with a man who had something to tell by which I might shape my course.

"Well, I was pretty well up in classics, mathematics, and that sort of thing. I got a situation as a tutor in a family. You stare? It was pleasant enough; but, unfortunately, one fine day little Miss——Well, there's no use in mentioning names——came home from her finishing-school: a sentimental, foolish young person, with soft eyes, and long ringlets, and a silly smile. 'Gad! how that girl persecuted me with her blushes! And her drooping

eyelids ! And her sighs ! And her little ambuscades—running out of one room or the other as I was on the landing or on the stairs ! To make my story short, I had to leave a comfortable sort of house and nice people, for the little goose wanted to run away with me.—Just imagine, she sixteen and I a year older !—vowed she would die if I didn't. But she's married and has two children now. She cut me dead at the opera the other night as I was unconsciously staring up from the pit into her box. Well, I got a place in a school——”

“As a master, Mr. Standish ?

“Yes, to be sure——”

I thought of Mr. Cuffe, poor Mons. Le Bœuf, Snell, and all the other helpless sufferers who were bullied, plotted against, and evil entreated day and night by the crafty little conspirators, on whom they took mean vengeance when fortune favoured them.

“Wasn't it a miserable life, sir ?”

“It was not quite the most enjoyable existence in the world, but I made up my mind to do my duty, with God's help. I resolved from the very first to go to the bar, for I had an instinct which told me there were the makings of a lawyer here (he touched his bold open brow with his finger). Hang me if the head-master's daughter didn't take to worry me ! She used to bother me with bouquets and idiotic verses ; and Mrs. Syntax aided and abetted her. Among my father's devices for playing the deuce with himself was the famous one of establishing a claim to a dormant title—an Irish peerage, Standish of Turvey. My grandfather used to get furious at the notion. ‘An' if ye geet it, what the de'il wad ye do wi' it ? To be a peer without ony policies is bad enoo' ; but to be an Airish laird without a saxpence ! The man's a dreevelin' lunatick !’ I had a whole lot of papers of my father's, and old law books with the Turvey coronet on them, and Lord knows what else which he had inherited. So Missie got it into her head that I was a young lord in disguise, dying for love of her, though too modest to avow it. I was fairly obliged to fly again. It's too ridiculous, isn't it ? You think I'm a vain fellow telling you all this ! Eh ? Well, then, I came to London ; I gave lessons in everything I knew, and took lessons in shorthand and all sorts of things I thought would be of use to me. I toiled night and day—I wrote in magazines—till I scraped up money enough to enter my name at the Temple. I shall be called this year please God, and I have an engagement as reporter on *The Hercules*, which gives me bread and butter, and enables me to dispense with ‘grinding’ or tutoring. All this time I was helping the poor old women. They are living in a small village in France

for economy sake ; and they send me over wonderful nightcaps and slippers and smoking-caps, which I have to pay tremendous freights upon, so that I could fit out a college. There's my case. There is only one drawback to it. I am horribly in love ; and my folly will culminate in the gigantic delicious mistake I am going to make, as soon as I am called, of marrying the sweetest, loveliest girl who never had a penny. But I do not despair even then. Well, what do you think of that ?"

There was a frankness about the young man which was irresistible. I was about to open my lips and my heart to him, when the mysterious person styled "Mrs. Chandler," who looked like a bundle of old clothes on a crooked stick covered by a bonnet, announced "Dr. Chick." A shabby young man, with a very strong smell of tobacco radiating from him, even through the fumes of Standish's pipe, presented himself, and listened to the explanation of my case with immense gravity. Dr. Chick first examined my hand and my knee, and dressed the cuts and abrasions which were healing fast. Then he put his hands on his knees, and looking intently into my face, inquired, "And what are you going to ask ? What's your figure ?"

"I don't understand you, sir ?"

"What do you expect ? I can prove a good deal of injury if your governor is obliged to go into court. If I was you, I wouldn't stir out till it came to trial. I could swear you kept your room. And who knows—with proper treatment there might be erysipelas ! Oh dear me, such damages as you may have ! Quite a lucky young fellow, 'pon my word ! Ah ! I never light on such chances, though I go in excursion trains at Easter and Whitsun, to the seaside and back, and take six hours of the briny for half-a-crown, as if the most of them that go hadn't more appetite than they knew what to do with."

Dr. Chick took his departure after a whispered interview with my host.

"Well," quoth Standish, with his pipe still in full power—"well ? And so you were going to tell me——"

I told him all I could bear to tell ; my grandfather's death, poverty at home, my troubles and contentions at school and at college, my longing to see the world and retrieve our fortunes.

"And suppose, now, we find out Sir Richard Desmond for you, what will you get him to do ?" he asked, rather severely, when I had finished my story. "You have run off from your college because you couldn't stand a little chaff, and you have evaded a man who was kind to you in order to seek out one who doesn't care for you. Besides, instead of being so discontented, you ought to

be one of the happiest fellows in the world. You have friends; you have enough to prevent your starving; you need not depend on any one—at least you can get a profession—do anything you please. And you go and sell your clothes and run off from college and distress that worthy Mr. Bates! He will be hunting you all over London; no doubt he came up by the next train, and will go to Sir Richard Desmond's if Maws has not given him my address."

"You do not understand me, Mr. Standish. It is because Mr. Bates is so kind I do not like troubling him. Sir Richard will not be at all put out by anything I do. Still, you are right; I ought not to do anything to distress Mr. Bates. I will not either."

Standish took down a "Court Guide."

"'Desmond, Æneas, Colonel, Clarges Street, 10, Oriental Club.' Indian, I suppose. 'Desmond, John, Jermyn Street; Desmond, Ralph, Albany, White's; Desmond, Sir Richard, Bart.; Miss Desmond, 207, Grosvenor Street.' There he is. I never knew there were so many Desmonds in London; no one ever knows till one looks. We can call there. And we can send to Langley Station. And you must write there as well as to Dublin. I think you should send a few lines to old Moody at Sweatenham, whom you admit to have been a just sort of fellow. Ay, and I would make it up by a letter to all the fellows you've quarrelled with, whom you don't think ill of. Write before we go out, and meantime I'll just see if I can't rig you out a little decently, for it won't do for you to make your bow to London society in that costume."

He went out with a pleasant smile. I sat down and tried to write, but my thoughts wandered far away. Standish told me I ought to be happy! He did not know—how could he?—what my heart yearned for. Far away in that little French village there were fond souls, who loved him tenderly, and whose prayers were for ever shielding him. Who cared for me? Mr. Bates was not of my kith and kin. He was very kind, but I could not love him. No! Beyond the seas in that distant land——

Standish was back with a great bale borne by a porter.

"Here is all the outfitter's people could think of. Are your letters ready? We can finish them afterwards. Now let us try on your toggery. Shirts! We'll take half a dozen of them. That jacket is marvellous. Bravo! They must have been made for you—hat, boots, and all. We'll get the old things done up. And now we'll go forth in all our glory and astonish London."

London rather astonished me. If a straw as it is whirled along in a mill-race could reflect on its situation it probably would not

feel much concern. Why should it? What matter where it is going, at what speed, or with what companions? What could it ever hope to be, mill-wheel or not, but a straw? But man philosophizes about himself and his fellows as they are swept down in the flood. He wonders where all these people come from, and where and how they live, and where they are going in such a hurry, as he is borne in the struggling mass, which is such a subject of curiosity to each of its infinite atoms.

"Sir Richard Desmond is not in London," said the porter. "We expect him back to-morrow night, but Miss Desmond is in and her niece."

"Has a gentleman named Bates been calling here lately, may I ask?"

"Bates?—Mr. Bates, of Dublin? Yes, here is a card he left early this morning." (He took one from a card-plate, and read, "Mr. Bates, 23, Dominick Street.") "He's stopping at Fenton's. He saw the ladies and went away in a great hurry—is inquiring after a youngster who ran away from school—Master Brady—a ward of Sir Richard's. Perhaps you know something of him?"

I felt my cheeks reddening. All the time I was wondering, "What will Mary Butler say when she hears I have run off from school?" I would have given anything to have had a chance of telling her my own tale.

"If Mr. Bates calls again, pray show him this card. Now we'll go to Fenton's."

Mr. Bates had breakfasted, "gone out early." He had not been in since, and had left no message, except that he was going away that evening. We drove off to the Temple. Inside the letter-box was a card of Mr. Bates's, and below his address there was a pencilled inquiry, "Have you seen Mr. Brady?"

I was led about in a reverie from place to place by Standish, who sent off notes and left messages indefatigably, but my guardian was not to be found. Standish proposed to take me to an early dinner at a literary club of which he was a member, called "The Addison," and despatched a messenger to Fenton's with an invitation for Mr. Bates.

"You will meet some strange fellows, I dare say. But Mr. Bates, if he be the man I take him, would like the chance of meeting men most of whom have more brains than money."

The club met in a long, narrow, ill-lighted room, up a corkscrew staircase; the walls were covered with panels, each of which belonged to a member, who followed his taste and fancy in the subject of decorations. Some were filled by screens covered with scraps; others contained portraits or landscapes; others coats of

arms and bits of *diablerie*, well or ill drawn and coloured. Amongst these panels one riveted my eye—it was a light sketchy oil painting of a woman in a gorgeous Oriental dress, seated in a divan, with a long pipe in her mouth, lazily puffing out a little nebula of smoke, and surrounded by fruits in vases, and piles of shawls, and gold and silver vessels.

“Do you think it good?” asked Standish. “That’s Joliffe’s panel. He’s a Yankee painter—a very good fellow ; but he pulls the bow like a Parthian.”

“It is very like some one I know—that is,” I stammered, “a picture of some one I have seen. Pray ask who it is.”

“Joliffe, my young friend wants to know who your Eastern beauty is. He is much struck by a resemblance to some one he fancies he knows. It has just been put up, I was telling him.”

“Ah ! she was something like, I can tell you, my Mahometan Princess. That is only a copy of my picture made for a great Indian friend of mine, for which he gave me a lakh of rupees. It’s like, though it has not the fire of the original. Poor Mohtee !”

“Is the lady dead, then, sir ?”

“Not that I know of. But the Nawab was an awful jealous wretch, and he’d just as soon have chopped her up as look at her. Led her a horrid life at times, though she really governed the place for him.”

“And who was she, may I ask ?”

“A Circassian, I think. But there’s no saying. After the Nawab saw her smiling at me, I only was let take peeps just to complete my sketch for the picture.”

“And where did you see her, sir, and how long ago ?”

“Why, in the Nawab’s palace, at Pergunnahpore, to be sure, last year—no ; it’s two years ago now nearly.”

“You are absolutely eating nothing !” said Standish, as we sat at dinner, “You’ve lost your heart to that great fat singing girl, whom Joliffe gave a few rupees to for a sitting, and has dressed up with all those splendours out of the resources of his imagination.”

I suppose there were witty men at table, certainly there was much laughter ; but I was busy staring and wondering at the likeness in the panel in the corner of the room, though there seemed to glare out from it a mocking, cruel, stony glance, in answer to my eager gaze. One member of the club—a small weak man, whose head was so set on his rounded shoulders that it was, as it were, thrust out at you, at times fascinated me by the glitter of his eye and his weird features. It was a singular face ; the thick hair, pushed back from the forehead, fell in a manelike

shock behind his ears ; his eyebrows, shaggy and full, were set over the eyes as clouds overlie the lightning, and when he spoke they were lifted somewhat, and the eyelid rose ; then the features gleamed on you, filled with a kind of radiance ; the pupils were literally charged with fire ; the thin, curved, flexible lips opened ; the shaft, quick and dazzling as the electric flash itself, was launched—the thunder followed, and the face slept again.

A waiter brought in a letter for Standish, who opened it, and handed me a note from Mr. Bates.

“Fenton's, 7 p.m.

“MY DEAR TERENCE,—I must leave town to see Sir Richard Desmond at once, on urgent business. I enclose you some money till I return in a day or two, when we will decide what is best to be done, as you don't like Sweatenham. Why didn't you tell me ? I am very glad you escaped, and acted so well in that dreadful smash. Mr. Standish will, perhaps, be kind enough to get you lodgings, and I have ordered clothes, &c., to be sent to you. Should you need anything, go to Messrs. Protheroe & Clark, of 15, Bedford Place, and ask to see Mr. Clark, who knows all about you. Not a moment to spare. I have been after you all day, and am overwhelmed in business ; but I must say I do not think you acted well in leaving college without a warning word beforehand to

“Your affectionate guardian,

“J. BATES.”

“And so I'm to take care of you ?” said Standish. “Mr. Bates is good enough to say Mr. Maws spoke of me in the highest terms. It looks like briefs to come in the Great North and South Junction Company. Let me see. What do you say if we go to the opera ? It must be the gallery, though, for you have no dress clothes.”

I was glad to escape from the Evil Eye. There was a great press of vehicles as we passed out of a narrow street, and our cab grated alongside a carriage in which sat an old lady with a peevish face, overlapping a companion in her swelling drapery.

“Mind where you are driving to, cabman,” shouted the coachman.

“Mind yerself, cauliflower-wig, and keep your own side,” roared the cabman.

There was a slight collision, our cab cannoned off the massive wheel of the family coach, and as the old lady turned I perceived it was Miss Desmond, in greater state than usual, and that she had been eclipsing none other than Mary Butler. The coachman

whipped his horses, and in another moment pulled ahead into a line of carriages, whilst our driver was brought to and engaged in a brisk dialogue with a number-taking policeman.

"What a beautiful face!" exclaimed Standish. "Did you see her?"

"Yes, indeed I did. I know her, too. That was Miss Butler, Sir Richard Desmond's niece."

"She is exquisite. How calm she was, keeping that old parrot beside her, who was chattering and fluttering all her feathers, in order. They are going to the opera, I suppose."

We mounted up and up, and at length came to a region high above the amber glories of the boxes, fresh in their new silks and satins, just as the curtain was opening on the first scene of the opera of a new composer—one Giuseppe Verdi. Far down below me, after my eyes had become accustomed to the glare, I saw Mary Butler seated, half concealed by the curtains of her box, with her eyes fixed on the stage.

You may imagine what were the sensations of a raw Irish lad who is taken to the opera for the first time. I was in a trance, in which the senses were lapt in thrilling pleasure, unbroken save by the hateful fall of the curtain and the buzz of the people talking between the acts; and in some mysterious way Mary Butler was mingled with my delight. What would I have cared for the opera had she not been there? Suddenly she had vanished—the box was empty.

"I saw the parrot peck at her and carry her off just now," observed Standish. "I could almost hear her sigh through my glass as she turned from the stage. The parrot was in great agitation, and your fair friend's colour changed as she spoke to her. She left her bouquet behind her. They went off in the deuce of a hurry."

I was glad when it was over. We were in a whirlpool of people at the foot of the box-staircase—flowing drapery, diamonds, pearls, white cravats, black coats. A knot of men were conversing together in the midst of the crowd.

"What do you think of the opera, Mr. Skewer?" asked Standish of one of them.

"Opera?—call that an opera? Did you ever hear such screech-owl noises in your life?"

"Ruin any singer in the world; no voice could stand it," screamed Mr. Kettle.

"A mere trick of melody here and there—no music in it," growled Mr. Rizzio. "Choruses all in unison."

"And so *that's* damned," quoth Mr. Standish, as we got out

into the arcade. "These men are the great critics on whose fiat the doom of composers depends—for the time, at all events."

"I thought it very beautiful. What have you got there, Mr. Standish?"

"But you mustn't think so. It can't be anything if Skewer, Kettle, Rizzio, and the rest say it's not. That?—oh, that's the bouquet the young lady left. I tipped a fellow to get it for me. Here it is, if you like it. And now we'll get some supper and go home to the Temple."

I was almost afraid he was going back to "The Addison." I dreaded those staring eyes; but Standish selected a quiet tavern, and as I crept upstairs after him to our elevated residence I took the opportunity of giving two or three kisses to the paper and leaves and flowers of the bouquet, which were only seen by the feeble gaslight on the landing.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO ESSAYS TO BEGIN LIFE.

EARLY next day I was at Grosvenor Street. The footman did not know exactly what had occurred; but there was bad news from Sir Richard abroad. He had met with an accident, or something of the kind. Miss Desmond and Miss Butler had started by the first train for the Continent.

Standish was out when the cab deposited me in Temple-lane. He had left a note to say he would return in the evening, and that meantime he had told Wilkins, the Head-Porter, whom I was to inquire for, to have a trusty man to go about with me and see the sights.

I did not care for sights. It is wonderful how young people are bored to death about sights by persons who ought to know better. It is only when one has got accustomed to the greatest sight of all—the world itself, and the creatures in it—he begins to bestow a thought on the details. Still I went about as I was told, at the tail of the crowds led by gabbling vergers. I felt how the most sacred shrines could be rendered common-place—how "The Abbey" would cease to command veneration, and St. Paul's be turned into a showman's booth. Three days passed in London, and I saw all my sights.

I sat in one of my old musings. It was evident Mr. Bates did not know what to do with me, and yet he was my best friend.

Maurice Prendergast was a friend, perhaps, but he knew nothing of the world. Major Turnbull?—I could not tell where he was to be found. Jack Window? I had searched for him in vain in the "Court Directory." Would it not be a good thing to decide before Mr. Bates returned? I seized my hat and flew downstairs in an instant.

When I swung about in the current of Fleet-street, all the plans I had revolved in the Temple were resolved into one.

"I want you to drive me to where they recruit for the army, cabman!"

The man looked at me.

"You don't want it for yourself, is it? A young gen'elman like you must have done something before he'd go for a sojer."

The cabman stopped at the corner of a narrow street, not far from which rose the towers of Westminster. There were men dressed in different uniforms, with canes in their hands, cockades and streamers in their shakoes—sharp-eyed, eager-looking fellows, with stripes on their arms, and ribands and medals on their breasts, loitering about the pavement at this corner.

I had seen the recruiting party at Kilmoyle, when they took off young Dempsey, and Mat, our pantry boy, and I knew well who the men with the gay ribands were.

"Here's a job for you, sergeant!" said the cabman to the nearest; "I brought him, and I hope you'll remember the bringing money."

The men with the rattans were around me in a moment.

"He's mine!" said one. "You looked at me first, I think, sir!"

"No, he didn't. Wasn't you the young gentleman as spoke to me back of the Horse Guards, and made the appointment yesterday evening?"

I looked at them, and said to the fattest—"I want to speak to you, if you please."

"Why, he's only the Ingey service; he ain't a reg'lar at all," exclaimed a Sergeant of Marines.

"You know, Mattocks, you ain't going to inveigle that young gentleman to have his liver burnt out of him?" argued a hoarse-voiced cavalry man.

"And the Company never pays nobody," observed another.

"And you'll be among a set of blacks and savages if you take on there," shouted another.

"And here's fine hussar and dragoon ridgments—the R'yal Artillery——"

"And here are fut ridgments, where they make a smart chap,

if he's a gentleman like yourself, sergeant, in a few months, and give him a commission for nothing, in less than no time!"

Many voices were in my ears, but Sergeant Mattocks had me by the arm and led me down the narrow street in which soldiers were lounging about the dingy beer-houses, and frowsy women were standing at the doorways. The soldiers as we passed looked at my captor enviously.

"There's Mattocks again!"—"He's a young 'un this time!"—"That's a thirty pounder, I'm thinking, Bill!" The burly sergeant conducted me with dignity to his particular quarters in the back parlour of the "Wellesley Arms." Flaming placards of most brilliant young cavaliers cleaving to the chine turbaned foes all over jewels, stuck in the windows, inviting all "Lads of Spirit to enter the most noble service of the Honourable East India Company—a Bounty of £5!—a Free Kit!—a Free Passage!—Speedy Promotion!—a Glorious Career!—Splendid Prize Money!—Full Pensions!"

The Honourable East India Company offered these and many other advantages to recruits for cavalry, artillery, and infantry, in a cheerful, warm country full of palaces and gold mohurs, pearls and diamond mines, where snow and cold were unknown, and where at the present moment there were unusual prospects, as there was a certainty of war. Sergeant Mattocks would open that El Dorado to all comers.

The windows of the "George the Fourth" and of the "Marlborough Arms," close at hand, were given up to similar announcements for the benefit of various branches of the regular army. Around these hostelries were loutish, uncouth, shambling men and boys, whose slovenly bearing and poor attire offered a strong contrast to the spruce, well set-up, jauntily-dressed "touters" for the service of the country.

"What'll ye have to drink?" quoth Sergeant Mattocks, showing a handful of gold and silver. "Only name it."

"Nothing, if you please."

"Then, Mary my dear, send in a half-pint of fine sherry wine to my parlour till we drink this dashing, gallant young gentleman's health! Mary! B'leve you me! This here young gentleman will come back—aye, afore two years are out—a commissioned officer. Mark my words.—There!"

There was a compassionate look in the girl's face as she carried in the sergeant's sherry to the den reeking with the odour of spirits, and tobacco smoke and cheese, in which he had his "office." An old leaden inkstand and stumpy pens, some printed papers, and a blotting pad lay on a table battered and dented all over with

enthusiastic pewter noggins. The sergeant surveyed me now more closely.

"And you want to list, Mr. Brady? A good fighting name. There's many of them goes to glory in war times. Five feet eight, I should say; and what a chest he's got—teeth all right? As good a bit of stuff as ever *I* sent—that's all I can say. Not an apprentice? No! *That's* all right. Parents living? No! Good again. Any guardians or governors to object or to buy you out?—I will risk it. Age"—Sergeant Mattock's face fell. "*Never!* I ne-ver would b'leeve it! You must make a mistake. Bless you! *I* know what men is, and I know what boys is; and I tell you, you'll never see seventeen. So, be a man, and say so. Seventeen shall we say, last birthday?"

"No; I tell you the truth."

The sergeant bit his pen.

"You'll take the shilling, any way? I can enlist you for the reg'lars; they're not so petickler as my company—let me see. P'raps you'd be seventeen if you come to-morrow? Take the shilling now, and we'll chance it."

"Chance what?"

Now it had never entered into my head but that the instant I agreed to enlist I was to put on my uniform, go off to my regiment, and begin my duty. And now I found that I should have to go before a magistrate; that I should have to be examined like a beast for the slaughter; that forms, oaths, and attestations, must prelude the career which to my mind ought to be inaugurated by knightly vow, such as Dunois would have sworn on the cross of his true blade.

"No! if I cannot go off at once I will not enlist at all; I will not begin my life by a falsehood. The sergeant sighed heavily, but his arguments were in vain.

"You must have been in dreadful battles?" I said to the desponding Mattocks as I gave him half a sovereign for "the sherry and his trouble." "What a number of medals and ribands you have!"

"I never have seen powder burnt in my life, except at reviews, and the like; and what's more, never mean to," replied Sergeant Mattocks, with a grin. "Why, there's the advantage of the servis. They doesn't reward a chap as had the chance, and punish a chap as hadn't the chance. That's what I call fair and honourable; and it's a thing to think of, too, if you're coming this way to-morrow, or next day, when the tin is short, or the guv'nor's cross, or the young lady won't look at you. Here's Googerat! Well, I wasn't within twenty miles of my ridgment

then, but the ridgment got it, and so did I. That's for Chuckewall. I was there; but then, you see, I was in charge of the baggage of my company. And as I tell you, there isn't one of the whole of 'em I didn't get without being in the way of the lead. So think of that, too. There's an advantage for you."

My cabman was waiting at the corner still.

"Did you take the shilling, young gen'elman? It will be a matter of thirty pounds if you take the next step after you're before the beak. Most of the young swells pass that, I think."

The sergeants at the corner regarded me with interest as I got into the cab. They waited anxiously for Sergeant Mattocks, who with a false air of the "Marquis of Granby" about him, was waddling up the street flourishing his cane in the air like a marshal's baton, to hear how I had escaped. I had still another string left to my poor feeble bow.

The cabman laughed when I told him to "drive to the place where they enlisted sailors."

"It's Ratcliff Highway, I believe; but I ain't sure. We'll ask when we git there."

What a drive it was! Shops and streets, streets and shops, churches, narrow lanes, great buildings, the footways thronged with people, and the roll of wheels for ever rising like the noise of the seas!

The driver pulled up at last opposite the door of a public-house, outside which were numerous placards with the pictures of ships in full sail speeding calmly and prosperously to all parts of the world—New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Buenos Ayres, Leghorn, China, Bombay, Calcutta. There was indeed the world to choose from!

Next to the public-house was a small tenement of wood like a cobbler's stall. Over the door was inscribed "Shipping Office for Mariners. By Royal Authority." There were some half-dozen men in jackets, straw-hats, or old tarpaulins, seated on a bench, who made way for me as I entered, with wild misery's mark on them stamped by themselves.

"Have you ever been to sea afore?" asked a squalid old Jew, behind a sort of counter, as soon as the cabman had introduced me as "a young gen'elman who wanted to engage as a sailor."

"No—never."

"Then of course you know you'll have to pay something? I can get you a nice ship; the captain's a perfect shentleman—Captain Morrish; he shail to the Bight of Benin, a beautiful plashe; lovely young ladies. Ain't they, Sheik? Tell the shentleman vot you knosh of Captain Morrish, of the *Palm of Peash*."

A swarthy Krooman in bare feet, ragged calico shirt and drawers, with his head bound in a coloured cotton handkerchief, thumped the counter.

"Let young massa go *Palma Peace*. Oh, she de ship ! sail like duck. Captain Mors ! Oh, Lor' a massy ! He make she go and ebbery one, sure-lie."

"Captain Morrish take no one but first-rate shwell shentlemen. He get a hundred poundsh for the two voyage. But he ish my friend. Say fifty pun', and we'll see vot we can do."

"I say, Ikey," shouted a brawny fellow who had been listening, "none of that, you know. Morris hain't been long out of trouble for the last affair. Very like murder that was, Master Ikey. See here, young gentleman. if you want to go to —— at once—go. But don't take it out by the day, as you would with 'Murdering Morris' of the coast trade."

The Jew raised his fist menacingly, with a scowl on his brow. "Leave my offish, you rascal ! Tiger Bill, I'll make you pay for this ! Give me monish you owsh me, you scoundrel ! If I don't let Captain Morrish know vot you said, you see. Get out of my offish, you rascal !"

The Krooman, watching the Jew's eye, threw himself between the sailor and me, exclaiming—"Yes, Tiger Bill, you get out of dis." Ere the words had well left his lips a tremendous blow from Tiger Bill sent him under the counter. In an instant there was a horrid commingling of oaths in strange tongues, the Krooman leaped to his feet, knives were drawn, and all the wretched crew of the "royal shipping-office" beat to quarters for a battle. I rushed into the street and made for the cab. An iron grip was laid upon my arm. Turning in angry terror I encountered the astonished gaze of Jack Window.

"Terry Brady, by all that's wonderful ! In the name of Heaven, what are you doing here ?"

I could only seize his hand, and say—"Oh, Mr. Window !—Oh, dear Jack Window, how glad I am to see you ! Let's get away from this dreadful place. I'll tell you all !"

"This is but a Wapping row. We have these things night and day here. But come, my dear boy, come along, and explain this mystery of mysteries."

We got into the cab, and I told Jack all my story since we parted as we drove towards the Temple.

When I finished, his great round eyes, which had been opening wider than before at every sentence, were marvellous in size and roundness.

"You mustn't do it, my lad. Stick to your friends. You're

too old for the navy. You can't begin at your time of life the work of cabin-boy; at best you would become an ordinary sailor—a miserable waister, hauling on pulleys and tackles all your life. when you're not drunk in the crimp's public or lying up at hospital. No!—better jump into the river there at once! Why should you jump into anything, except into some snug berth at home? It strikes me all you Irish are a little wrong in the upper story. And what about the trout? How much I should like one more day up that Dodder."

"I wrote to you twice," he continued; "but somehow I've a knack of not posting my letters. I managed for once in my life to be lucky. I have commissioned the *Barnacle*, and shall be off to the West Indies in a week—that is, if ever the *Barnacle* gets there. I'm picking up men now, and if you'd gone a little further down the street you would have seen my flag flying out of the 'Mother Carey's Chicken.'"

When we got to the Temple, Standish was waiting for me at the top of the staircase.

"Mr. Standish," I said, "here is my friend, Lieutenant Window, whom I met by the merest accident."

"Aye, by Jove, sir!" exclaimed Window, "and in Ratcliff Highway, too, just bolting from a row in a Jew's crimping-house."

"I've been so anxious about you," said Standish. "I have news for you. Mr. Bates will be back to-night, and I hope he will remove you from the temptations of Wapping."

A knocking at the door interrupted him. It was the cabman.

"It's been a long job, sir," he said, "from Vestminster to Ratcliff Highway, and a halting here and there, and in driving to and fro. It's a good five hours, and I hope the young gentleman won't give me less than fifteen shillings."

I put my hand in my pocket. The old leather purse which had belonged to my grandfather was gone, and with it all my little store of money—the crisp note, sovereigns and silver, and the old seven-shilling gold bit that I had kept in every vicissitude.

I clapped my hand on my side—the old gold watch was gone too.

"And what the deuce else could you expect in the company you've been keeping?" asked Window. "It's very well you've got any clothes left on your back."

"And you could not tell me you were going to run off to sea! And what were you doing at Westminster, may I ask?" said Standish, reproachfully, as the cabman retired. "Going to enlist, perhaps?"

"The very thing," replied I, grumpily. "You told me you had thoughts of doing so yourself once on a time."

"Aye! But I had not a friend in the world to help me."

"He's in a bad frame of mind, sir," ejaculated Jack Window.

There was a knock at the door. I heard the voice of Mr. Bates. I rushed out, seized his hand, and, touched by the kindness of his look, threw my arms round him, and buried my face on his breast.

That morning all had appeared to me blank, dreary, and dark—a waste over which shone a feeble ray it would be mockery to call hope. Now all seemed brightening; friends were turning up around me. Standish insisted that we all should dine in his little room.

Mrs. Chandler was in requisition, and summoned to her aid a myrmidon, who was if possible more decomposed, ghostlike, and mouldy than herself. Two waiters from the "Cock and Mitre" toiled upstairs and down bearing dishes with metallic covers, like fragments of ancient armour; and over a bottle of port, which was conveyed in great state and dignity from the cellar of Mr. Twister, who "lent it, with his compliments, to Mr. Standish," a family council was held, in which Mr. Bates expounded the situation.

"I consider it very fortunate that this young gentleman should have met with one of whose industry and talent I have heard so much, Mr. Standish; very fortunate, too, in gaining the friendship of such a gallant and distinguished officer as Mr. Window. We all know at the other side of the water how you saved the poor emigrants on the *Meraboo*, sir. Well, as I am saying, there is Mr. Standish, a young gentleman making a name for himself by hard work, striving night and day to advance himself, who is the delight of agreeable societies of literary men, and marked already for fortune in an honourable profession——"

Mr. Bates was fond of an oration now and then—(the second bottle of port from Twister's had come up, and was meeting its fate).—He went on—

"Here is Captain Window, who has made his way too, as I am told, by sheer attention to duty and by high personal character. Now, with such examples before you, and with the fortunes of an ancient family to retrieve, are you, Terence, to abandon everything for a chimæra, and forget your duty and yourself? You have told us of what you saw at the recruiting station, and of the scene in the sailors' shipping-office. But it was almost an accident which prevented you, a Brady of Lough-na-Carra, becoming a private in an Indian regiment, or a common sailor before the

mast. This lad's guardian with me is Sir Richard Desmond of Kilmoyle. I had to go over to arrange matters. But that's little good to us. He has been at Wiesbaden to try the waters; but he tried something else that wasn't good for his health of body or pocket. The moment he leaves his niece behind him, he goes over head and ears into mischief; and when I saw him at Boulogne, where he came to meet me, as if I was always travelling with a few odd thousands in my note-case, and could arrange everything at once, he was looking, Terry, just as if he ought to be making his will, and a good job if he would make it before all Kilmoyle goes. There's a hint of a duel he had about some high play at Wiesbaden; and there were other hints, too, though I can't believe them. Any way, it all comes to this. The little money—of course I say this among friends—that was lent long ago by the dear old doctor—and very little it was—cannot be got at unless I put the screw on, and then we would be in an awkward position——”

“My dear Mr. Bates,” I interrupted, “I would sooner work my fingers to the bone than let Sir Richard be annoyed about money of mine. Indeed, I never was aware of its existence at all till this moment.”

“Bravo,” exclaimed Jack Window, who was always in favour of anything impracticable in money manners. “I always said the boy was good.”

“Well,” continued Mr. Bates, “I am glad to hear what you have said as a mere expression of feeling towards Sir Richard, poor man. I don't suppose it would do much good if we were to press him; for without horse-racing, or great living, or show, or indeed anything but a watering-place now and then, he manages to run through every penny he has, and it's getting very low water with him now, I can assure you. We talked of you. He insisted on your getting a commission. I told him all about the railway accident, and your escapade to London. I pointed out to him the impossibility of your entering the service with your present means, and he felt bitterly that he couldn't help the grandson of his old friend. ‘One night's work undone would enable me to act towards the boy as I could wish.’ I have the best reasons for knowing he has no money now. If he were on good terms with Denis he would ask him; but I know Mr. Desmond felt great anger to your father after he married; and they say he is an implacable man. The only thing we can do now is to face the situation. Come back with me to Ireland to-morrow. We will decide what ought to be done. God knows I will act for the best, at all events.”

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW I BECAME DR. BRADY.

AND so next day it was I turned my back on London. As I was packing up my little portmanteau, I took out the leaves and flowers which had fallen from the bouquet and hid them deep down in my little store of finery, and the colour mounted to my cheek, all alone as I was. I bade good-bye to Jack Window and Standish with many assurances of friendship. They saw me off to the train.

"Look out for me in the papers. The *Barnacle*, you know, Terence! And send me a line now and then, my dear lad. I'll be sure to answer you this time; I will not keep the letters in my pocket. When you are at all inclined to grumble, look out of your window, and perhaps you'll see a beggar or a cripple, and if that don't set you right, what will? God bless you!"

"And mind, whenever you come to London you will have as much as we can divide between three; for I hope to be married very soon," said Standish. "Now, no thanks—not one word! Why, what do you think Mr. Bates has done? He has given me a promise of a brief that will set me up my very first term—and all for doing nothing."

And so we parted, and, as it happened, to meet again. They must have fancied I was an unaccountable and perverse boy! Even to myself it appeared as if I were so. My movements were determined by accidents—my life influenced by trifles. One said, "do this," and I did it, heedless whether he were a centurion or no; and yet at times another coming with authority could not constrain my course.

A settled purpose which I dared not avow to myself led me, nevertheless, as an unseen hand will guide one in the dark, and he knows whose hand it is all the while though he cannot see it.

"I have been thinking seriously, Terry, that the only thing for you is to become a surgeon," said Mr. Bates one evening after my arrival, as we sat in the dining-room of his gaunt mansion in Dominick-street. "What do you think? How would you like to follow your grandfather's profession?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, not much, sir. I have no taste, I fear, for the work; besides, I understood long ago I was to enter the army."

"Ah, things have changed, my dear Terry—terribly changed

since that was thought of. Sir Richard and I have been discussing the whole matter, and he quite agrees with me now that the army without money is a bad thing. You see, there is literally nothing coming in from Lough-na-Carra. The rent we get does little more than pay the interest on the mortgages; it would be as well to sell the whole of the property, such as it is, outright, but for your grandfather's wishes—and, indeed, our own natural wish to keep it as long as we can for you, in case of a turn of fortune."

"But then it will need money to make me a doctor, sir, won't it?"

"So it will, Terry—or, rather, so it would; but your grandfather's old friend, Sir Philip Hampton, will be delighted to take you as a pupil for love, as he says. You will not be a doctor, but a surgeon, you know—next thing to being a soldier: cutting off legs and arms, and that sort of thing——"

"I wouldn't like it, sir," interrupted I; "though it's very kind of Sir Philip, I'm sure."

"Like it," said Mr. Bates, repeating my words, and looking at me, as much as to say—"You have no right to have any voice in the matter," as guardians do say sometimes. "You wouldn't like it, eh? Then, what would you like to be? I tell you, Terry, if we bought you a commission to-morrow, it would be a last incumbrance on the property, and yet you could not live on your pay; and then where is the money for your steps to come from? If Sir Richard were rich, or if I——well, that's out of the question."

Little I thought that the noble young gentlemen I admired, with something like fear, as they clanked down Grafton-street, were all so much interested in a great pecuniary speculation, in which promotions and exchanges, retirements and deaths played an important part.

"No," continued Mr. Bates; "if you accept Sir Philip's offer, you step at once into the profession under the best auspices. What else is there? There's the Church! There's not a living in the gift of any of us; besides, you have no call, I think, that way—and I really do believe (he added with an air of regretful conviction) it is not quite right for a man to go into the Church unless he's pretty steady and has a serious turn. Just think of the awful declaration! How some of them do it is more than I can fancy, though God knows their hearts best."

I did not put in any claim for the Church, and merely nodded my head in assent when Mr. Bates had finished.

"Then there's the law," he resumed. "Now, Terry, look at

me—To begin with attorneys: you know how I work; you see me for hour after hour, day after day, in that dingy room, with those old tin boxes—how I'm summoned here and sent for there—But I have friends, and am supposed to be doing what's called a good business! Yet I declare to you, after paying that old Mooney, the head clerk, and the office people, rent and expenses, advancing fees I don't get, and the like, I can only just grope on."

Mr. Bates did not mention that he kept a good table and excellent cellar, and filled the one and emptied the other as fast as he could.

"And then, I don't know how it is, over here an attorney is not as big a man as he is in England. They call some of them solicitors there—it's more genteel. The men who will come to you and take up your time for hours, and call you 'Bates, my boy,' or 'Bates, my good friend,' will all but cut you in the street among their great acquaintances. Why, there's that dirty little scamp, Lord Belmore! Didn't I give up whole months to him and his affairs, and get him on his legs, and when I sent in my bill of costs, hang me if he hadn't the insolence to say he would have them taxed, and that he never was more astonished in his life than when he saw the account at all, as he supposed I was acting for him in a friendly manner."

"And what did you do, sir?"

"I wrote to the puppy to say, that unfortunate as I was in ever having known him, I was not so unlucky as to feel any friendship for him. I made him a present of the costs. By Jove, Terry, if I had been a counsellor I'd have kicked him. There's the disadvantage of being an attorney."

"Well, but a barrister, sir?"

"Oh, if you knew all the misery!—the disappointed hopes, the blighted lives, the grinding poverty and hopelessness—hid under the wig and gown, you would sooner break stones on the road than enter on the contest! Assuredly the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The strong do vanquish, and the swift do reach the goal, of course, sometimes. But you are not of the stuff of which silk gowns or judge's robes are made, my boy. Some of the soundest lawyers and the best scholars I know are going about the Four Courts with empty bags, covering their penury with their tattered, faded gowns."

"And why don't you employ them, sir?"

"Because they're not the men to get on with judges, or with juries. The attorney must look to that. And so, poor fellows, they starve on and die. No, indeed, Terry, nothing that I can see

promises so well for you as to become a surgeon. And then," he added triumphantly, "if you do, as I said, there's the army open for you. You can be an army surgeon, remember; wear the uniform, travel about, and gratify all your longings for seeing foreign countries, instead of sticking over a desk at home."

It was evident my guardians had made up their minds. I could do no better. As Mr. Bates spoke, I was thinking of the dark hovels into which I had penetrated with my grandfather long ago, and the scenes I had witnessed in the dwellings of the poor—the levées at the dispensary door—the sufferings and the cries of pain; I remembered, too, how the old man's path lay amid the blessings of the poor, and felt that in his calm and happy life—happy, in the main, for years—he had wiped away many a tear, healed many a tortured spirit, and done more good for the poor and distressed of the world than all the soldiers who ever drew a sword. That was abstract reflection. The philosophy of it did not at all tend to satisfy me that I ought to be a surgeon; and, to tell the truth, I was only reconciled to the idea at all by the development into uniform and the sword attached, which Mr. Bates had knowingly shadowed out at the end of his argument. However, I was beaten. The fond hopes of my childhood, that I should one day be as Graf von Brady, Field-Marshal in the armies of his Imperial Majesty, clad in armour, riding over prostrate infidels, truncheon in hand; or as General Don Felix O'Brady y Vasquez, in surcoat of steel, with lace collar and ruffles, and trunk-hose, leading a charge of grim pikemen; or even as Captain Brady, in modest scarlet and silver, and Hessian boots, storming the fortress of Lall Sing—all were dashed to the ground. At all events, I could wear the scarlet and the sword, and if I were not to lead armies, I could cure them, and try to undo the ruin the warriors had made. But how much I had to sacrifice no one could ever tell or know but myself. In my day dreams there was one constant abiding image, object, and end; I dared scarce probe my heart to find it, but I knew it was there. Oh, what castles I had built in cloudland at the door of which always stood a certain little person with the brightest eyes, the loveliest smile, the most winning frankness and simplicity in the world! How I exulted in my soul as I was riding up the grand avenue amid flourishes of trumpets and rows of garlanded maidens, to lay the spoils of victory at her feet! What feats of chivalry I performed in the press of knights, seeing through the tossing plumes, and flashing armour, and glittering lances, the one fair face, for ever beaming on me, till triumphant I knelt before her to receive the prize of Honour! I sighed for the days of old, that I might seek the lists of another Ashby-de-

la-Zouch, and, cleaving my way through hosts of bevizored caitiffs, bear her favours o'er the field. It was hard to abandon all those high aspirings. They were not real nor likely to be realized. I awoke at times, and then I knew that sort of chivalry was no more, but I could not see the chivalry of the lancet. Could I ever win her by any efforts of successful surgery? My most romantic musings fled at the notion. The plain, hard prose of matter-of-fact existence was before me—a dry, harsh lesson to be learnt every day, and to become drier and harsher as time sped on.

I went to Sir Philip Hampton's house in Merrion Square early one morning, as my guardian directed me; but, early as it was, he was engaged. The sleek, smooth "own man" of the great surgeon showed me into a room filled with people. They were all so grave, they might have been taken for a congregation at church. There sat the mother with her child, smoothing his pale brow, as he turned listlessly over the engravings in a book on her knee—there fretted restlessly on his chair the man of pleasure, who had come to seek at Sir Philip's hands the health he had cast away for ever—there, in patient suffering, drooped the wan girl, whose hectic flush and short sharp cough marked her for the grave—there the hypochondriac, with her endless tale of pain, all the more terrible because imaginary—robust youth arrested in its career by some sharp and sudden admonition of coming evil—the halt, the maimed—waiting and longing till the moment, often dreaded yet so much desired, when the beckoning finger and nod of the janitor of the prison should summon each of them to the presence.

At every tinkle of the little bell, Strong, the "own man," appeared, list in hand, and one of the congregation rose at his bidding and glided out of the room, followed by the envious eyes of the rest. Knock after knock announced fresh visitors, who added new types of sorrowful humanity to the crowd. Coughs, little moans, suppressed sighs, the rustling of silks, the creakings of chairs and boots, or the twitter of the leaves of books and papers, never ceased; but no one spoke save in the lowest whispers.

Occasionally they all looked up and became animated for a moment, for through the opening door, now and then, there burst a startling peel of laughter, and the cheery voice of Sir Philip was heard as he came to the door of his study and bade adieu to his patients—

"Get well? Sure of it! Of course you will. Do as I tell you, and 'pon my honour we'll have many a day with the garrison hounds yet."—"Yes, indeed, my dear young lady!—When you

come back I expect to have an early invitation to your wedding !” And then the pleasant voice would be shut out, and the wheels would rumble off with some comforted invalid.

It seemed as if the morning would never pass. I got quite tired of the anxious mother and the pale-faced boy. An old gentleman next me, who had crossed his legs and uncrossed them every two minutes for the last hour, nearly drove me into a frenzy, and the poor girl with the hectic flush and the short cough, whom I had been watching with sorrowful interest, had been dismissed. What comfort Sir Philip had for her, Heaven knows !

The new-comers were generally reduplications of the departed visitors. The door opened at last for one who at once attracted my attention. Supporting his feeble steps on a stick, his stately form bent, his face so changed I did not recognise it at the first glance, Sir Richard Desmond entered, leaning on the arm of Mary Butler. My breath came fast ; I felt the blood rush to my face as her dress swept over my feet. A vacant chair just left by a patient was beside me ; and as the invalid settled himself slowly into it, whilst Mary held his hand, she caught sight of my face and nodded a recognition.

“Uncle, look who is beside you ! It is Terence—Terence Brady, you know.”

Sir Richard turned his dull eye upon me, and took my proffered hand as I stood up to make room for his niece. His fingers were cold, and clammy, and thin ; they put me in mind of a grasp of Jocko’s hand long ago.

“Hallo ! what are you doing here, Terence ?” he said, in a thick, gasping voice ; “you are not come for Sir Philip’s aid, I am sure, my man ?”

“No, sir, except in one way. I am going to be his pupil, I know—as you and Mr. Bates agreed, sir,” I added, after a pause, in order to let Mary be aware I had not selected the profession from my own free will. “And he sent for me to be here to-day.”

“Ah ! what would I give to be in your place, Terry,” sighed Sir Richard. “Look at me,” he whispered, as I approached him ; “a mere broken, miserable wreck, about to sink just as you are rising to the surface. You, young, healthy, full of hope, the future all light and joyous ; I, old before my time, without hope or light or happiness—my endless future near at hand ! Nay, Mary, I’m not going to complain !—I want this lad to see what some years of what is called careless living may do with him. That horrible bell ! it sets my nerves on edge.”

He leant his chin on his stick, and Mary and I exchanged looks.

What mine expressed I cannot say ; hers were full of sympathy. Those eloquent eyes merely said, "See how he suffers !" She put his hand in her own, but he jerked it away impatiently, looked at his watch, and muttered to himself. Sir Philip generally gave about five minutes to each patient, and I counted that there were still ten to go before him. So I said—"Miss Butler, I fear Sir Richard will have to wait an hour yet."

"Do you think Sir Philip would see him before some of the others?"

His quick ears heard the whisper.

"An hour!" he growled. "It would kill me. I'm scarcely able to breathe now, I'm so fagged—for we have travelled all night. I was tired of those London fellows. Mary and I left only yesterday. If I could see Strong I might manage it—or see here, Terry! go out and tell him I must see Sir Philip at once. It's an urgent case. Take this purse and tip him, you know. It's his way, I'm told."

I went out. In a few moments more Strong appeared at the door and beckoned to Sir Richard Desmond. The old gentleman whose proper turn it was got up and left his seat, but Strong said, "Not yet, Mr. Tandy, if you please. Sir Philip told me to ask your pardon, ladies and gentlemen, for breaking the order; but this gentleman needs immediate attention, and would have been here first only there was a bad passage from England."

And amid a fire of angry glances and muttered indignation, Sir Richard hobbled away, helped to the door by Mary and the "own man."

She returned, and I sat down beside her, but I did not venture to speak.

"Poor uncle is very ill, Mr. Brady. Does he not shock you?" (Why was I "Mr. Brady," instead of "Terence," I wonder?)

"Very, very ill, indeed, Miss Butler! I am pained to see it."

"They say, in London, there is little hope he will ever be quite well, though he may yet live a long time. We have been going from place to place all over Europe nearly. We were at Pau, and the baths in the Pyrenees lately, after we had tried half the watering-places in the world, I think, for a day at a time. Aunt has been quite exhausted by our rapid travelling; and the only comfort I have is, I am so strong nothing upsets me—for my uncle would be miserable if I were obliged to leave him to wander alone. We only came to London three days ago from Aix-la-Chapelle, and I should not be astonished if we were not longer in Dublin."

"And are you not tired, Miss Butler?"

"What is the use of being tired if it's one's duty not to be so?"

In his heart my uncle is so kind to me, I feel I ought not to complain if he were even exacting. Besides, it is not he—it is his illness which makes us suffer. And so you are going to be a surgeon, Mr. Brady?"

"I am, Miss Butler," I answered, with a little quaver in my voice.

Oh! shade of Ivanhoe, of Quentin Durward, of Sir Launcelot!—is it come to this? Such a confession to make to the little Ladye of the Castle!

"My guardians think it best, as I shall not be rich enough to go into the army as an officer—a fighting one, I mean."

"And much better, too," said Mary Butler. "You will be a friend to the poor, as your dear grandfather was; you will perform the noblest of all good works next to those of the ministers of God. Oh! I'm so glad you are not going to spend your life with a sword tied to your side, idling from place to place; or in time of war fighting against people who have fathers and mothers and sisters to lament them if they fall, and whom you can have no right to kill. I am so very, very glad for your sake, and all your friends."

"Friends! I have few. If I fell—I mean, if I died—I should have neither father, nor mother, nor sister to lament me; and as to friends—well, there would be, perhaps, Mr. Bates and Maurice Prendergast, and some of the old people at home—at least, at what was once my home."

"Well, you are not going to die just at present. At all events, you really are unkind to leave us all out at the Castle. Why am I not to be your friend, Mr. Brady—your oldest friend, too? And there is my uncle, who is your guardian—and Major Turnbull, who is often asking after you——"

My breath came thick; I looked into her face—that sweet, fair, candid face, with its inquiring eyes—as she repeated, "Why do you say you have no friends except Mr. Bates and that gloomy Maurice, and the old servants, when I am sitting beside you? Or will you only admit me to be an acquaintance?"

"Oh, if you knew how I long to speak! To be your friend as of old is my greatest desire. Will you—will you be indeed my friend——"

At this moment the door opened, and Sir Richard made his appearance with Strong.

"I am sorry," he said, with a low bow addressed to all in the room, "to have interfered in the due reception of Sir Philip's patients, but in fact I believed I was a dying man; and assuredly I will never cause any wrong of the kind to any lady or gentleman

here again. Come, Mary, let us go. We must, if you are strong enough for the journey, leave to-night—that is, if I be alive. Good-bye, Terry; I shall hear of you from Bates; and you can write to me. Or, stay, you can send a line for me to Miss Butler, if it be anything pressing you would like to say to me. She will give you an address that will always find us, if we are not in Ireland or London.”

I followed the invalid, and saw him into the carriage at the door. Mary Butler took out a little card and pencil, and wrote on it the address of Latouche & Co., Bankers, Dublin, and gave me her hand with a smile, as she said—“Good-bye, Terence—(why am I “Terence” and not “Mr. Brady” now?)—I’m so delighted to think when you are old you will not be like Major Turnbull, fond as we are of him, with nothing to do but play billiards, tell stories of storming castles, and killing tigers, and take care of all that remains of his liver. Good-bye, and mind! Work hard, and let uncle Richard know how you are getting on!”

“Is there—is there any answer to my last question?”

“Question!—what question?” asked Sir Richard, impatiently.

“You won’t keep us all the morning, Terence, if you please.”

Mary Butler, with her eyes turned full on me, said very simply—“Mr. Brady has taken it into his head he has no friend at Kilmoyle; and what he wants to know is, if I am his friend. Did you ever hear anything so absurd!—as if we could be anything else. I’m sure we shall be friends all our life; won’t you, uncle?”

Sir Richard only gave a nod, and waved his hand to the footman to close the door.

“And so,” finished Mary, kissing her hand and smiling as she spoke, “the answer to the last question is—Yes, of course. Good-bye again.”

I leaped up the steps into the hall, where Mr. Strong was standing.

“And so you’re one of the Bradys of Lough-na-Carra? Why didn’t you tell me who you was when you came? Sir Philip’s been askin’ for you, and he’ll soon be ready for you. You know Sir Richard Desmond, I see, and his purty niece. And a nice ending Sir Richard beyant there is making,” he added, jerking his head in the direction of the carriage. “I b’leve he came here instead of sending for Sir Philip to save the fees. That was not always the way wid the Desmonds. Now they’re poor as church mice, anyway. Come this way now, and you’ll soon see the masther.”

He led me to a veritable chamber of horrors. "Curious cases," in jars and bottles, were ranged on shelves round the room; the terrible work wrought by disease or by freaks of nature on the human frame reproduced in wax surrounded us on the walls. At the end, half concealed by a curtain, which only rendered its blanched bones more awful to me, as yet new to such sights, stood, nicely articulated, a skeleton on its pedestal. Skulls of various shapes and sizes were arranged in a cabinet, labelled not with the names of the owners, but with the styles and titles of the races of which they were held to be craniological types. I surveyed the scene with terror and disgust.

Mr. Strong slightly flicked away some dust off the skeleton with his handkerchief, as he remarked, "That's Mat Costigan, the coal-porter. Sir Philip did that when he was a student, and an iligant thing it is. Whin you look at Sir Phil, you'll see the mark of a clip over his eye he got from the boys when the young docthors were getting away with Costigan's body. Mat was six foot six, and a terrible fighter," proceeded Mr. Strong. "Look at the dents in his head. He was a bewtiful made man, and Sir Phil detarmined to have him, and the boys were detarmined he shouldn't, and they had a battle royal in the churchyard; but the docthors had the best of it—though Leeson (him that has the great practice in Limerick now) had one of his eyes out, and Dr. Little had his arm bruk! There's Sir Philip's bell."

And Strong vanished, leaving me to study all that remained of Mat Costigan. Little did I think as I drew the curtain to cover the grinning horror, that it would be my fate to see so many forms of death, and to hear my horse's hoofs crunch through whitening bones, which were all the vultures had left. I sat with averted face pondering over the work before me, much doubting if it ever could become a labour of love.

Mary Butler approved of it. What of that? What was Mary Butler to me? I, a poor lad, without rank or fortune; she so beautiful and so rich; the heiress, all the world said, of a great Indian, the petted favourite of Sir Richard Desmond. And then I thought, if I ever became like Sir Philip Hampton, would Mary still look down on me? Pshaw! what folly am I dwelling on now? Work, Master Terence, work on.

I was summoned at last to the room which so many had entered that morning with heavy hearts; and I remembered Jack Condon's prescription as I was ushered in to Sir Philip Hampton. He raised his eyes,—as much sagacity as kindness in the glance,—nodded his head, and, pointing to a chair, wrote on for a few moments, whilst I studied his outward appearance. There was

no affectation of professional gravity about the man. He was dressed in the height of fashion of the time, in its brightest style—a blue dress coat, with high velvet collar, tight sleeves, and gilt buttons—a lavender-coloured vest—a blue handkerchief, with white spots—pale grey pantaloons, tightly strapped over varnished boots—and he flourished a perfumed silk handkerchief in his hand, now and then in war against the flies. The room had a delicate odour of flowers, which stood in stands along the walls; a library of richly-bound volumes; pictures, fine engravings; busts in the niches—statues by Canova; a sea-nymph, wearing a garland, in one corner; in another a radiant Apollo—all was light and airy in the man and in all around him. I listened in silence to the sketch he drew of my future profession; and when he finished, all my doubts had vanished, and I became full of hope and resolution.

“And now, my young friend,” said Sir Philip, putting his hand on my shoulder, “I have said all I can think of at present. You will begin lectures to-morrow at Park-lane.”

He looked at his gold repeater, bundled up a roll of papers on his library table, and, humming an air from the latest opera, bounded out of his study and leaped into his carriage with the lightness of heart and step of a boy.

I was to enter Trinity College, to keep on at Greek and Latin, and, at the same time, to begin my course of lectures; but, to my great relief, I was to be reprieved for a time from the dissecting-room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LIFE IN COLLEGE.

A FEW mornings after my first interview with Sir Philip, I was sitting in the rooms of the Rev. Dr. Gayler, one of the Fellows of Trinity College, eating an “Examination Breakfast.” The custom was, in those days, for each of the Fellows to give his pupils, who were going up for entrance examination, a breakfast in his rooms. Maurice Prendergast was among those at table. He was in deep mourning, and looked pale and thin, but he had grown very tall.

“My dear Maurice!” “Terence Brady!” I rushed to seize his hand, and in my enthusiasm, catching the end of the table-cloth, nearly dragged all the breakfast things off the table.

Maurice had not much effusion in his manner, as I thought, but by Mr. Gayler's desire I sat beside him, and we conversed in whispers, whilst the others were as busily engaged as their state of mind and preparation would admit, with the bounteous fare. We—a fat young fellow-commoner that was to be, with an early glass in his eye; a pensive mathematician, who was dreading the terrors of a Greek chorus; a classical prizeman from Dugannon, thinking of the coming *pons asinorum*, and mysterious equations; and a couple of rollicking dunces for once regretting the pleasant hours spent in hurling and hunting—were in all the glories of new gowns and trencher-caps.

"There are two of us," he said, "Rose and myself; and I must work for her, for my poor father has left us badly off."

"And what are you going to be, Maurice?"

"That is more than I can just say at present. You are going to be a surgeon, you say. I should not like that much."

"I suppose you'll try for a scholarship—maybe for a fellowship—you are such a clever fellow, Maurice?"

He looked at me, and a shade passed over his face as he replied, "Why, don't you know I can be neither? I belong to the old faith; as my fathers were before me, I am a Catholic. I could have gone to Maynooth; but I am not of the stuff from which our priests are made. And I have come here to find how liberal and charitable our great University is to us Catholics in this Catholic land, and to work my way as I can. I will try the Bar. Perhaps, if I turn traitor to my party, for I have a party—the party of the people, Terry—I may be rewarded with a Revising-Barristership, or even become a Commissioner of Insolvency."

There was always something bitter in Maurice's tone; and now his words almost hissed in my ear as two and two we walked across the court into the Examination-Hall, headed by Mr. Gayler.

It was a large examination; the tables in the great hall displayed a long array of students, boys and young men, and a few hard-featured, shabby schoolmasters or tutors in the country, who had saved up enough at last to begin the career for which they longed—a sizarship, a curacy in the distance. I sat beside Maurice, close to the statue of Provost Baldwin, gazing with something like awe at the group of Fellows round the stately reigning Provost, chatting as pleasantly as if some hundred and fifty pair of eyes were not watching them in suspense.

Maurice regarded them with a frown. "I wonder," he said, "how many of these gentlemen are priests in their hearts. Is it not too absurd to insist on keeping old Trinity a Protestant

convent? Latin and Greek and science would not avail a Scaliger here without the Thirty-nine Articles, celibacy, and holy orders. It is really too monstrous."

"Maurice, it strikes me, if you are not of the stuff of which priests are made, you certainly have the material of a dissenter."

"I think—which is more than you do, my good Terence."

Two days after we were assembled in the hall at Mr. Gayler's to hear our fate. "My pupils have done very well, on the whole. Maurice Prendergast, second place," he read from the list. "Very good, out of a hundred and fifty-two. My friend, Dr. Ball, will be delighted at your success, Prendergast."

Maurice, who stood with folded arms, said, "I expected to be better, sir."

"Better! Why, Knox, who got first, is two years older. Besides he was at Rugby, and was one of Arnold's favourite pupils. You could not hope to beat Knox, and yet you are marked '*proximè accessit*.'"

"I did not hope to beat Knox, or any one, sir; I hoped to be first, that's all; and, perhaps, if I were not a Roman Catholic, the examiners would have found my claims as good as those of even Arnold's favourite, as you call him."

Mr. Gayler stared at his pupil, who met his look unmoved. "You impute disgraceful partiality, sir, to honourable men. Let me hear no more of such expressions."

"Sir," replied Maurice, "I should be sorry to lose your favour; and I am sure you are too just to censure me for speaking what I believe to be the truth. As the College itself draws so broad a line between the Catholic and the Protestant, it is not surprising a Catholic should entertain a suspicion that the Fellows act in the spirit of the establishment."

"I will not argue the question before my pupils, Prendergast," exclaimed Mr. Gayler. "See in the faces around you what an unpleasant spirit you excite already."

Maurice's lips curled with a bitter smile, and he looked defiantly at some of us who had drawn away from him as if to express their dislike.

I was twentieth—a very good place, Mr. Gayler was pleased to say. I had been to a grim old stone house, called Draper's Hospital, and had entered my name for a course of lectures. I had also paid my fees at the College Anatomical School, and, lastly, I had "moved in" to No. 17, Botany Bay, Trinity College—a splendid suite of rooms in the quadrangle of that name, consisting of a black door, much battered and bruised, with a ponderous lock and bolt, over which "Terence Brady" was already glittering

in white paint—a dirty-white door inside, much battered also, opening on a small passage, off which there was a limited coalhole and a very modest amount of cellarage—a gaunt, whitewashed room, on the walls of which were remains of the bold designs of a former tenant—a bedroom of smaller dimensions, and a little crypt for the use of Phinny Codd, my “gyp,” who had been induced to include me in the list of the young gentlemen on whom he waited as general servitor. Mr. Bates had given me some of the furniture that lumbered his house, the walls were to be papered, and a great change was to be made in the aspect of my new abode. On my way from the hospital I called at Sir Richard Desmond’s in Merrion Square. The windows were closed, the paint blistering on the door; Mr. Vincent himself partook of the general aspect of decay.

“Sir Richard won’t be back this year, I think; he won’t have the house done up neither. Miss Mary, she is voyagin’ about among them German baths, poor lady. Miss Desmond, the aunt, won’t come back any more. She’s stoppin’ with friends at Bath, Lord help them. Sir Richard and she had it out in London, and she said she’d go off to Masther Dinnis out in India to complain of him; but she’s settlin’ down in England, after all. And, shure, did you hear, Masther Terry, that Misther Dinnis wants to get Miss Mary out to him in India? To India, indeed; no less. Misther Dinnis was always mighty fond of his poor sister, Miss Mary’s mother. Such a rage as Sir Richard was in, I’m told, when the letter came, you never see. And Miss Mary will lose the money maybe afther all, for Sir Richard has spent all the ready he could lay hands on, and it’s little she’ll have from him when he goes.”

The idea of Mary Butler not being a great heiress was somehow very pleasant.

“They say Miss Mary could have made a great match in foreign parts. Misther Dinnis is a kind of king out there, and he could marry her to the King of Persia or of Turkey, or one of the likes of thim, as easy as shelling payse. But, anyhow, she won’t be let go, and she didn’t want to go; and it’s only who’s good enough for her here I’m asking?—that’s all.”

I struggled with my distaste and prejudice, and faced the horrors of the charnel-house till I became familiar with the secrets of the prison in which life is kept till set free by death. I attended college lectures, read for weary hours, made fishing excursions in the mountains, and when the days were wild and stormy went down to the sea-coast in search of plover, curlew, and duck. A boisterous, clever fellow, named Bolton, who lived on

the same floor, was by the mere power of staircase thrown into frequent contact with me. He was supposed to be reading for a fellowship, but he had not yet got his scholarship ; and when "he sported his oak," and was believed to be sitting inside with a wet towel on his head, he was in reality engaged at a horse race, a game of billiards, or private theatricals. But he was careless and generous, ever ready to borrow as to lend, to fight or make friends, full of high spirits at one moment, at another plunged in despair. Maurice Prendergrast, who lived in lodgings in the town, partly because they were cheaper, and partly, as he said, "because he did not want to be under the noxious surveillance of the college porters," came in now and then ; but he grew more morose every day, wore a frieze coat and a "Repeal button," and attended all the meetings at Conciliation Hall. The great agitation was then at its height. The papers were filled with accounts of monster meetings, at which nearly every adult male in Ireland was reported to be present. The Roman Catholics within the College were a weak minority ; but as the agitation grew in strength they became bolder, and angry arguments, not always confined to words, occurred more than once in our rooms.

"Come, at least, and see him, Terry. It is surely a phenomenon worth noting. To-day O'Connell will be at Conciliation Hall, and there can be no harm in your coming with me."

"But, Maurice, I am no politician. I cannot think the man who uses his eloquence, his ability, his unbounded power over the people, to delude them to pursue a phantom can be honest."

"A phantom, Terence ? You think that Repeal is a kind of phantom ?"

"Of the most shadowy and yet dangerous," I replied. "If the people are told they have wrongs, and are taught to look for the redress of their grievances to a remedy they can never have, they will look beyond the remedy at last. All this agitation is but a preparation for rebellion. If you had back your old Parliament I don't think you would be much the better for it."

"Rebellion !" said Maurice, gloomily. "There's a spell in that word, I suppose. It's odd, too, it should have such terrors for Protestants. At any rate, you show little self-reliance if you refuse even to look on the face of the necromancer."

"Well, to prove my attachment to my principles is not so weak as you imagine, I will go with you."

It was a fine May-day ; and as we turned into D'Olier Street the streams of people pouring in the same direction pointed out the way to Conciliation Hall. There were decent citizens, poor mechanics, peasants in their frieze, coalheavers, carmen, and a few

whose dress announced that they belonged to the better classes, tramping along, to hang on the words of their Idol and their Prophet.

Conciliation Hall could not boast of any exterior grace or attractiveness. A bald stucco front, narrow and high, with poor houses on the quay facing the lifeless Liffey, which only bore a fleet of colliers, bringing coals to Ireland and taking back money to England. Would not a vast Irish coal-field be worth many Parliaments? Inside, a deep array of benches in a lofty hall, with a raised platform at one end, a table for the reporters, an elevated chair over it, and a gallery for ladies above. It was filled, early as it was; and as we were making our way to the reserved places on the platform which Maurice had obtained, a tremendous yell and cheer, mingled with stamping of feet, told us that the tall, broad, round-shouldered man, who was entering at the head of a body of excited-looking gentlemen, was O'Connell himself.

Again and again the people shouted; and as the Liberator, taking off his Quaker-like hat, put on a green velvet cap with a gold band and gold shamrocks on it, and stood up on the estrade, there was an outburst which was hushed in a long "'sh!" when he raised his hand for silence. And he spoke—a rich, sonorous, rolling voice, full of the most varied expression; an eye of singular keenness, veiled by a slightly drooping lid, beneath which it played in a light all its own; a wonderfully plastic mouth, large yet fine, thin lipped, passionate; an action easy, natural, and yet dramatic; language not always elegant or correct, but never prosaic or purposeless—a great Tribune for such a people as he sought to sway. He was telling them for the hundredth time the old familiar story which rang in every man's ears and fired his heart day after day—how their land was beautiful and its children were wretched—how their resources were infinite and their misery unparalleled—how they had been despoiled and trodden down by the stranger, who ruled in their palaces and monopolized the riches and honours of their state—how they must unite in their millions to get back their rights—display the strength of their brawny arms, and thunder in their might at the door of the oppressor.—“By moral force, remember!—the greatest political advantage is not worth the shedding of a single drop of blood!”

And he sat down amid such an uproar as might have greeted Demosthenes when the fierce democracy broke up, and “Let us march against Philip!” rolled over land and sea. How men shouted and women wept, as for the hundredth time the refrain of the old song floated through the air, and with it the

vision of an island fair and sunny, with ladies wearing rich and rare gems wandering from end to end of it—Malachi, in his collar of gold, carousing at Tara—the Red Branch knights tilting in Dublin Castle—the Pope in Stephen's Green—and processions of peers and commoners in saffron robes, with the ancient moustache and tuft—playing harps on their way to College Green—how a wild fire ran through their hearts, and hate raged fiercer than before—need all that be wondered at? Subscriptions flowed freely in; they came from America, from Australia, from the isles of the sea where the exiles of the modern Judæa toiled and worked, in hope and yearning such as animates with a common object the People of the Promise.

Maurice sat beside me with quivering lip. "Well," I whispered, "I have heard him. I do not wonder at his influence over the ignorant masses; but he can scarcely be honest. All that he has said points to force at last, if all fails."

"Thank God, it does!—thank God! Whether he knows it or not, who cares? I only know that he is rousing up again a spirit in the people which can only be quenched in blood."

"God, whose name you have taken, forgive you, Maurice. Do you think these poor, unarmed, helpless multitudes would have a chance against a nation which has its own army already planted in the land, strong enough alone to crush you—those to whom I belong, and whom I would join in case of need?"

"I don't doubt it," said Maurice, bitterly. "The Bradys have long been on the side of the enemy. As to our power, we believe in a God of justice. Help will come at last, and we can wait."

The subscriptions kept pouring in. The lists were handed up to the Liberator, who read out the name and amount, with various comments.

"The next sum I have to announce," said he, "is twenty-seven pounds, eleven shillings, and sixpence, collected by that most patriotic priest and accomplished gentleman, my excellent and esteemed friend the Reverend—the Reverend" (the writing was bad, he could not make it out, and said *sotto voce*—"What is the name, Ray?" coughing behind his hand at the time. "Father Pat Langan, Liberator," whispered Mr. Ray)—"The Reverend Patrick Langan," continued the Liberator. "Three cheers, boys, for Father Langan."

I was about leaving, when a loud cheer broke from the assemblage as the Liberator, who had been reading an address, suddenly exclaimed—"I read that sentence, Mr. Chairman, that I may

express my abhorrence of the sentiments of the writer. Colonel Wollop, of the United States militia, is no Irishman. (Cheers.) He has the audacity to advise the people of Ireland to take up arms and fight for their liberties, as the American colonists did. Sir, I repudiate the expression of such sanguinary and unchristian doctrines in this hall. I beg to move, sir, that the secretary be instructed to return to Colonel Wollop, of Tomahawk City, Arkansas, his contribution of eight dollars, and to inform him that the people of Ireland intend to keep within the limits of the law, and to resort only to Christian and constitutional means for the redress of their grievances."

A voice at my elbow called out "Stuff!" and in a moment Maurice Prendergast was on his feet, and exclaimed—"I wish, sir, to say a few words before that motion is put from the chair."

The great Agitator turned round, and was confronted by the calm and resolute look of the speaker.

"Do you move an amendment? You can't speak, except you support or oppose my motion."

"Yes, sir, I do. I rise to propose that the secretary be instructed to reply to Colonel Wollop, acknowledging his subscription, and expressing the regret of this association that the time has not yet arrived when the example of his countrymen can be followed with a prospect of success; whilst we pledge our faith to shrink from no danger and no sacrifice in the last resort to obtain the end for which we are now only struggling by means within the law of England."

Immense cheers broke from part of the hall, mingled with cries of "Bravo! Young Ireland for ever!" The Liberator was used to such conflicts. Drawing himself up with an air of infinite scorn, he said—"I object, Mr. Chairman, to your putting such a resolution from the chair. If this association, representing the people of Ireland, has confidence in me, I ask them now to show it, by rejecting with contumely the mischievous proposal of this man, who is, for all I know, a hireling of the Castle—(ay, sir, start and scowl as you please!)—and who would lead you to your ruin if he had as much wit as he has malignity and impudence."

Maurice's voice was drowned by shouts of "Sit down." O'Connell's motion was carried by a storm of voices, and Prendergast, amid a howl of angry epithets, hastily made his way from the hall. He was followed by ten or twelve young men, whose air and dress indicated that they belonged to a better class than most of the audience.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VISITOR AND A MYSTERY.

I WAS at breakfast one fine morning when a pounding at the outer door announced that some one was not willing to accept the evidence of its being closed as conclusive proof the occupant of the chambers was not at home. A hole bored in the wall of the bedroom "gave" out the landing, from which stray visitors could be reconnoitred without any suspicion of the surveillance; and Phineas was reporting to me therefrom such matters as struck him to be noteworthy.

"It's a tall hairy gintleman, with a mighty dark face and a hooked nose, that's pegging away," quoth Phinny Codd, my gyp, with his eye to the door-hole. "Bedad! he's got a good iday of knockin' at a dewer, anyway."

"I must see for myself, Phinny."

And, gathering up my dressing-gown, I went to my bedroom, removed Mr. Codd from his coign of vantage, and surveyed the stranger, who, having knocked with a large cane up and down all the panels, and battered at the iron-plate of the lock, was writing on a card. I had never seen him in my life before. He was, as Phinny said, tall and dark, and hook-nosed, with very bushy eyebrows and a thick drooping moustache and beard, slightly grizzled. He was dressed in deep mourning, and had altogether an aspect which attracted attention. In these days all the world shaved except cavalry officers, and to them the beard was tabooed, so that such an appearance in College, not to say in Dublin, or in Ireland itself, was very unusual.

"I wonder what he wants, Phinny?"

"Bedad, sir, isn't it best to ax him, then?"

"Maybe it is a mistake. He may want my namesake, Sir Brady, the scholar, or perhaps he has come with a message from Sir Richard? He has a foreign air."

"He's took a penn'orth of paint off our dewer, anyway. Now he's going, anyway! He's putting his writin' into the dewer——"

I was already on my way to the door. The stranger looked up—he was down one flight of stairs; as he returned he inquired, in a soft, shy voice—"Am I fortunate enough to find Mr. Terence Brady in his chambers?"

"My name is Terence Brady, sir. I am sorry to have kept you

so long waiting, but in fact I was scarcely prepared for visitors at this hour—I beg you to excuse the delay.”

The stranger bowed, and removed his hat as he entered, exposing a bald head, on the top of which was a deep scar. He seated himself in my easy-chair, and as he did so his wandering eye took in the whole appointments of the room, including Phinny Codd, who, in an intensely dirty apron, was making believe to remove the breakfast things. He paused for a moment, twirling a card in his fingers, and in a hesitating, undecided manner, began—“I really must ask you, Mr. Brady, to accept my apologies for giving you so much trouble. The fact is, I have no reason for the visit except that I heard by chance you were here, and I thought I would call to see you.”

This was not very lucid, so I bowed and said nothing.

“I suppose you are wondering who I am? I quite forgot to say, Mr. Brady, I was an old friend of your father, and——”

“My dear sir! although I never remember seeing him, any friend of my father must be welcome to me. May I ask your name?”

“Yes, to be sure—I quite forgot that. When a fellow has had a sun-stroke his memory is apt to become a little queer. My name, however, is one I don’t suppose you ever heard as that of a friend of your father’s—Alan Fraser, eh?”

He handed me a crumpled card, which I unrolled, and read the words, “Colonel Charles Alan Fraser, Fraser’s Horse, H.E.I.C.S.” Beneath, in pencil, was “Morrison’s Hotel—a friend of your father.”

As I raised my eyes from the card, I met his fixed on me with great keenness.

“Yes, Colonel Fraser,” I said, slowly, “I have heard of you before—at least if you are the same person as the Captain Fraser who was on board the *Ross-shire* Indiaman when my mother was coming home to Europe.”

“Ah, yes, poor lady. What a sad thing that was! But years, you know,”—he sighed, “years smooth away all our sorrows.”

Colonel Fraser’s glance was uneasy. It flitted from me to the wall and to the floor, and back again incessantly.

“You knew my mother, Colonel Fraser, did you not?”

“Oh, intimately—that is to say, her father and I served in the same force. I remember her quite a little girl, before she was married to Jack Brady of the Queen’s.”

“Have you seen or heard of my mother lately?”

Colonel Fraser gave a nervous start in his chair.

“I? God bless me! How should I know where she is?” he exclaimed, with an agitated air.

"I ask you, sir, because I was told you were seen with her after her disappearance from the ship, and that you found her a home when she deserted me. Tell me, Colonel Fraser, is that true?"

"Well, Mr. Brady, it is hard to make me responsible for what you have been told." He paused for a moment, and then continued—"I will tell you really what occurred. Mrs. Brady was a fellow-passenger with me when the *Ross-shire* went on the rocks. We heard she was carried off the ship by a wave, and was drowned. You were then a little chap in the nurse's arms. We had a consultation as to what was best to be done; and as your mother's friend, I took on myself to act. We sold off all the lady's things at Galle, and you were sent to your grandfather."

"But she was not drowned," I cried. "She was——"

"Let me continue my story, I pray," interrupted Colonel Fraser. "Some time ago it got into the papers that you were lost, and there was great grief about it."

"Grief!—who could grieve for me, Colonel Fraser?"

"All who knew your father," he answered. "Now excuse me," he continued, "if I revert to what you were saying. If I am not making too bold, as a friend of both Jack Brady and Mary Billing, I should like very much indeed to know what you heard as to your mother and myself. I may say I never approved of her course at the time, to begin with."

"Colonel Fraser, if you were indeed my father's friend, you will not be surprised should his son refuse to speak of the dishonour of his name—the disgrace of his wretched mother. I cherished her memory in my heart of hearts—I hoped for years that it might be my lot to penetrate the mystery which to my eyes was cast around her fate. Colonel Fraser! I know all! I have seen it in her own hand, that she abandoned me cruelly and shamefully within a few weeks of my father's death. Would to God she had died a thousand deaths sooner than to see her live in sin and shame! And you look in my face and mock me with these questions?"

He rose and placed his brown hand on my shoulder.

"You needn't shrink from my touch. You spoke of your mother's sin and shame—you wrong her. I was an old admirer of your mother's long ere your father saw her. After Captain Brady's death, as luck would have it, I lost my poor wife, and I sailed on the first leave I had since I was a boy, in the ship in which your mother was a passenger. There is no use to dwell on what occurred. I swear to you it was not my doing, but I admit I never was so astonished, and, I will add, overjoyed—for I had had the strongest affection for Mary Billing—as when I was made

aware that she had not forgotten me. It was my fate! I threw up my passage, my leave, everything!—I married her. She did not wish, for many reasons, to let it be known. She had hosts of horrid relations in India—half-castes, and a whole brood of dreadful country-born Billings of the lowest sort. She concealed the marriage, and I yielded to her wishes. Now there is the fact, my dear sir! You wronged your mother and me. I know all your story. I have seen Mr. Bates already. I was anxious to see you—although your mother and I are no longer what we were.”

There was a violent knocking at the inner door. Colonel Fraser took up his hat.

“Do let me see you,” he said. “I shall expect you at seven o’clock to dinner at Morrison’s. Do come, I beg of you. I have much to tell you.”

I was agitated by a hundred conflicting emotions. I did not heed Bolton’s cries through the keyhole, “Open the door, Brady! open the door quick!”

The Colonel had the handle in his hand. I exclaimed, “Stay one moment. My mother, where is she? Shall I ever see her?”

The Colonel was brushing his hat with his coat sleeve. He looked at the nap and crape intently, and, without raising his eyes, replied, “No!—I think not. I will tell you all when we meet—adieu!”

As Bolton charged in, he started slightly, bowed, and then with quick, firm step descended the staircase.

“I say, how the deuce do you know that dark fellow, Brady? They call him the Nabob at Morris’s. How pale you are, old man!”

“And where is Morris’s, and how do you know him, Dick, may I ask?”

“Morris’s! Such a capital place! You just come and have supper some night, and try your luck. I was coming to tell you of mine, and, begad! when I saw the Nabob, I nearly shouted with fright. I thought he was the devil coming to fetch all back again, and me into the bargain.”

“You have been up all night again, Dick! You will go to utter ruin, my lad.”

“Nonsense. Come and look before you speak. Come along.”

He dragged me across the passage into his room. The table was covered with the untouched breakfast, and with piles of bank-notes—some crisp and white, others pulpy and dirty.

“There—look; feel and believe!” exclaimed Bolton. “These

are fives—these are tenners—these are small fellows. There's four hundred and six pounds on the table, my boy !”

“And did you win that at the gaming-table, Dick ?” I asked, reproachfully. “You promised you would not go there again.”

“No more did I. Pat Considine took me there. Do you want a hundred ? Do you want two—three—four ? It's all yours if you like. Pay me when you please.”

“Not one farthing to save my life, Dick. You say the dark fellow you met was at that place too ?”

“Yes ; I saw him there, more than once. He's not long from India, and has come over from London on a tour. He knows Lord Bighill and Finucane, and most of the bigwigs. He must have lost a tremendous lot.”

“More than you have won ?”

“I should think five times as much.”

A footstep was heard on the stairs. Dick ran to the door. He turned pale as he held it ajar. Looking over his shoulder, I beheld the classical and elegant head-dress of one of the college porters.

“That's from the Dane, Misther Boulton. He's waitin' for you to come imageatly.”

“Oh, Lord !—the Dean ! Can't you tell him I'm sick in bed, Barrett ?”

“I can if I'd like to tell a lie, an' be turned off, Misther Boulton ; an' besides, you'd have the Dane over at yer bedside in a jiffy.”

“Was I reported, then ?”

“Oh, rippoted, indeed ! Small harm that 'ud be. There was some one at Morris's informed on you, I'm thinkin'. The Dane's stravagin' and ragin' most triminjous, and it's a dose of county air ye'll be getting, I'm afeerd.”

“Well,” quoth Dick, “give the Dean my compliments, and say—oh yes ! say I'll be over the instant I've done my Greek Iambics for my tutor. I'll have some money to make my sick-leave pleasant, at all events, my dear Brady, if the Dean really means mischief.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE COLONEL'S REVELATIONS.

THE clock marked the course of the hours unheeded. This man, whom my mother had married ere my father had been more than a few weeks in his grave—a gambler, a spendthrift—what

did he want of me? Why did he come to visit me? True, he had relieved me of an ever-present disgrace and misery. She had become this Fraser's wife. But how did he speak of her? Where was she now? Should I never see her—never upbraid her; never—oh, never—say that I forgave her all!

I went out at last to see Mr. Bates. He was not at home.

I was late for lecture. Sir Philip, as he whirled past me behind his pair of high-stepping greys, shook his forefinger menacingly in good-humoured rebuke for the first time. But punctual to the minute, I was at Morrison's hotel.

"The Colonel's not in yet, sir; but dinner is ordered for seven, and he can't be long. The young lady is in the drawing-room already. Pat, show this gentleman to No. 10."

What young lady? I thought. Colonel Fraser said nothing to me of any young lady.

A girl dressed in white was standing before the mirror opposite the door, arranging a rose in her hair. She turned round. I passed my hand over my eyes. Surely this must be noon-day madness!

"I must introduce myself, Mr. Brady," said a sweet little voice; "papa told me you were coming, and I expect him every moment. Meantime, let me make you known to his daughter, Mabel Fraser. We are almost kinsfolk, are we not?"

The very image of "the picture" was standing before me—the fair hair, the blue eyes, the curved lip, the snowy teeth, the pale, pure, white complexion. Colonel Fraser entered at the moment.

"Here is papa. You see Mr. Brady is here already. By the time you have dressed, papa, dinner will be very late."

We shook hands in silence.

"I am just going to ask your leave, Brady, and yours, Mabel, to dine in my frock coat. Ring the bell for dinner, Mabel. There is no one else."

He left the room for a moment.

I knew there was a cloud of white muslin somewhere in the room. I dared not raise my eyes; but I saw somehow the fair hair, the slight figure still, and that Mabel Fraser was looking at me from time to time as she turned over the leaves of a book.

The Colonel came back as dinner was announced.

"What an odd place this Dublin is! I could scarcely get along from the Castle just now, with a crowd cheering a big man in a broad-brimmed hat; and when I asked who it was, a fellow asked me in return 'if I pretended I didn't know King Dan?'

It was O'Connell and his following. What did you do while I was out, Mabel?"

"I had a drive with Mrs. Catly, papa. I was quite delighted with the buildings. And we met Captain Harcourt. He asked if he might call, and I referred him to you."

"Quite right, Mab. Brady, I fear you don't think much of Morrison's *cuisine*? But it's not bad; and I can promise you a curry, at all events, for my own cook will prepare it."

"Oh, papa, I forgot to tell you, old Mohun came up a while ago to say the curry powder's not very good, and to make a formal complaint of the people in the kitchen."

"Mohun! Is he here?" I exclaimed. "My old nurse!"

"I rather think not," answered Colonel Fraser; "Mohun is not an uncommon name in India. This is a fellow I have had with me a long time."

I could not eat; but I drank more wine than I was accustomed to do. If I looked up now and then, I was aware Mabel Fraser was enjoying her dinner. She had most probably set me down as a loutish, stupid, awkward lad, and only chatted with her father, who abandoned his attempts to make me speak. She appeared to be of the same age as I was—somewhat older, indeed, of the two. I could only think of the likeness. I was lost in conjectures, amid which floated now and then a suspicion of some unknown danger. Why had Colonel Fraser sought me? I longed to ask him a hundred questions. I desired to find out, as adroitly as I could, the truth concerning her of whom I could now speak without the burning shame which once flushed my cheek as her name came to my lips, but whom I was now not more willing to mention than before.

"And so you are going to be a surgeon, Mr. Bates tells me? Pray help my daughter to a glass of claret before she flies off to the next room and leaves us to ourselves. I thought you would have followed your father's profession, and have entered the army?"

"And so indeed I would, had it been possible. But it was not considered prudent by Mr. Bates; and Sir Richard was of the same opinion."

"Sir Richard who? I didn't know you had any Sir Richard related to you."

"Sir Richard Desmond, of Kilmoyle." Colonel Fraser clinked his glass sharply. "He is not related—at least he is only some very remote connection. The families were united by marriage long ago; but he was a friend of my grandfather's, and he is my other guardian."

I thought the dark face opposite to me was darkened for a moment, but the light in the room was indistinct.

"Sir Richard Desmond!" he repeated. "Is it possible he is your guardian? He is the elder brother of one of our great Indian people, Denis Desmond, who is now Lieutenant-Governor of Auripore—Mabel's *beau ideal* of an elderly hero and knight, only he will walk about in a pith helmet and white calico jacket. Eh, Mab? We have letters to Sir Richard, but unfortunately he is abroad, and I fear we have to go back to India without making his acquaintance."

"I heard to-day, sir, he and Miss Butler might be expected in Ireland. He is in very bad health."

"Miss Butler is his niece, is she not?" inquired Miss Fraser. "Mr. Desmond often speaks of her, though he can scarcely have ever seen her; but he tells us in India she is very pretty. Is she?"

"Pretty, Miss Fraser! Mary Butler is lovely beyond anything!—that is——"

I stopped short.

"That is you think so, and I am sure you are a good judge. It is a family gift," continued Colonel Fraser. "May I ask what she is like?"

"Oh! do—do describe her for me!" Miss Fraser put her tiny white hand on my arm and then drew it back again, so quickly, she could not have noticed the involuntary shrinking.

"I am a bad hand at such descriptions. I only am quite sure, if you could see her, you would agree with me;" and I was silent again.

"Mab! it is evident we can't induce Mr. Brady to make us his confidants; and, for my part, I like to see a young fellow begin life cautious even about such matters as his opinion of a girl's looks."

Miss Fraser smiled.

"I will take the hint," she said, and withdrew to the inner room, whence there issued presently a pretty little voice, running on the top of the notes of a grumbling old hotel piano, as a petrel skims the sea.

The waiter came in to ask if lights were required.

"No. Don't come in till you are rung for—at least unless you would like candles, Mr. Brady."

And so we sat in the dark. The Colonel lit a cheroot and puffed away, but I could only see the glare of the end in the obscurity. The door opened again.

"Who is that? What the deuce do you come in for now?" exclaimed the Colonel.

The answer was in an unknown tongue, but the tone seemed familiar to me. The Colonel gave some hasty reply ; the door was closed.

"One of my black rascals !" said the Colonel ; "some complaint about the servants or the kitchen, but I have sent him about his business. Will you have any more wine, or shall we go into the next room ? For my own part, I would like to sit here a little longer."

Another pause. At last I burst out with it—

"Miss Fraser's most wonderfully like my mother, sir."

I could see several quick strong pulls at the cheroot ; the fire glowed, died out, and fired up again, ere he replied—

"It has struck many people. Mabel is my daughter by my first wife, and there was no connection between the families. How do you know of the likeness ?"

"I judge by the picture of my mother we have at Lough-na-Carra."

"Oh, that daub ! I remember well when it was painted by an Italian vagabond at Lucknow. Like certainly, in a sort of way, but not at all with your mother's best expression. That was rare, and hard to catch."

"I would feel much obliged to you, Colonel Fraser," I gasped out, "if you would tell me something about the poor lady whom you tell me I have wronged so long. I would make amends, if I could, to her now, though she does not care for me."

"If you will take my advice, you will let her rest ! As you have never seen her, it is no harm to tell you that she has something not very pleasant in her nature, which has increased in force with years. 'Pon my oath ! when I think of her at times I feel almost afraid.—Hallo ! what's that ?"

The door had opened, and a white figure could be seen standing in the doorway by the light outside. The Colonel's voice caused me to start. I heard a briefer dialogue in the same tones as before, and the door closed again.

"As I was saying when Mohun came in, I am almost afraid no one could ever understand the wonderful natural gifts of your mother. It was all head-work with her lately, no heart at all—for ordinary matters, at least."

He paused for a moment ; I heard his glass filled up.

"If I told you now she was dead," he went on, "I should not be surprised to observe it made no impression on you, for I know how you have been brought up, and the stories they have told you."

I was in violent agitation. I cried out—

"Oh, sir! she is alive, I know! But where is she?"

"Thousands of miles away! It was only my influence long ago prevented her coming over here to claim you and all the rest of her natural property, as she terms it. A wonderful will!—a woman in a thousand of thousands!"

"Colonel Fraser! I don't understand you. Just now you said you did not think it would surprise me to hear my mother was dead. Although she has never acted as a mother towards me, I have tried to steel my heart against her, but in vain! Surely you have not asked me here to try my temper and my feelings—at least, if you have, I know how to terminate the trial."

I was rising from my seat when Colonel Fraser said—"I have no wish to try your temper or your patience; as an old friend of your father's, I have no wish except for your good. There are more ties to bind us together than you think. You know that I married your mother—that may be no claim to your goodwill or respect till you are acquainted with all the circumstances. But there are, for good or for evil, influences which bring you and me together——"

He paused and said no more.

"I am anxious to hear, but you will not speak. God knows I shall be very grateful for anything which raises me up a friend!"

"You are probably not aware that the Desmonds and I are connected, are you?"

"Not in the least, sir. I have only heard your name in connection with that dreadful event which lost me a mother, and left me an orphan, and I little expected ever to know you then."

"To be an orphan at eighteen is not so very bad, after all. The bird ought to be fledged, if ever he is to take flight, then; and to lose a mother, or go without one, is not always so very dreadful. But, as I was saying, my first wife was a cousin of these Desmonds; and, indeed, it is whispered that the Denis of whom we have been speaking was mighty fond of her. He certainly is of Mabel there; and but for some little differences which ought never to have parted such old friends, Mab might be his heiress, as he said she should be long ago. However, his great pet now is this pretty Mary Butler, whom you are so devoted to."

"Devoted, sir? I really don't understand you."

"Nor yourself. However, I don't wish to pry into your secrets. I will tell you mine. I might have well said your mother was dead; for she is so to me. I have every reason to believe she is alive and well. Our tastes and our tempers differed. Only one thing we agreed upon, which was, that we could not be happy together. I was stationed at a native court where there

was no society—Europeans did not vex us with their tattle; so she left me without the *éclat* and scandal which make separation so exciting and attractive over here. I shall ever feel the liveliest regard for her; and if at any time you wish to hear of her, or to communicate with her, I can manage to gratify you, though I cannot give her address to any one without her consent—that's part of our compact. Shall we go in? I have an appointment this evening and must leave presently, if you will excuse me."

And he walked away to the lighted room where his daughter was seated at the tea-table.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ORGIE AND ITS ENDING.

I WALKED back sadly to College. The Indian story had changed in its form and aspect, but was scarcely less terrible to me. I had sat face to face with Mabel Fraser, and stared at her in silence till her eyes dropped, and a faint blush rose to her cheek. Her pretty, graceful figure seemed still to stand before me as I entered my gloomy chamber. I heard her words as we parted—"Be sure you call soon; we must become good friends. I almost feel inclined to call you Terry on the strength of these mighty Desmonds. I can't help the likeness, you know, but if I could I would, believe me. Good night, Mr. Brady."

As I lighted my lamp I perceived a letter on my table. I opened it and read—

"MY DEAR TERENCE,—Come over to me this evening to supper, if you have no better engagement, and show you can forgive my rudeness. There will be a small party, conversation, and a couple of agreeable strangers.

"Yours ever,
"M. PRENDERGAST."

It was not yet ten o'clock. I felt excited by wine, and the excuse for postponing "Harrison's Anatomy" and my volume of Stock's "Demosthenes," left open at the middle of the "*περὶ στεφάνου*" was not to be resisted. I called to a passing jarvey, outside the college gates, and directed him to a suburb then rather frequented by students—a long straggling village on the sea-shore, near Clontarf, where Brian Boiroihme really did defeat

the Danes, and gave something of a national character to one act in Irish history.

"No. 16, Charlemont Terrace," said I, "as quick as you can."

The driver leant over as he repeated the address, and said in a whisper, "It's a fine night?"

There was something in his familiar, and yet inquisitive tone, which annoyed me. There were mutterings of distant thunder in the distance, and I said, rather sharply—"It's nothing of the kind—just mind your driving, and get on before the storm comes."

"It's No. 16?" persisted the fellow. "Shure that's where Mr. Prendergast lives!—one of the Sword-boys; and I thought you might be one of them. It's a fine night. Harrup, Kate! Cess! cess! cess!"

"What are the Sword-boys, as you call them?"

"Oh! sorra one of me knows, your honour! They live at Swords most of them, I believe, and that's the way the name came on them."

The Terrace was nothing very grand in terraces—a row of small houses, with gardens in front, facing a high wall, the boundary of a demesne. No. 16 was distinguished by lights glaring from the windows, and by cars before the door; all the rest was lifeless, as a Dublin suburb usually is at night.

A pile of hats in the hall—a cloud of tobacco in the passage—a strong smell of whisky and lemons—through the chink of the doorway a man visible laying supper on a long table—a maid vanishing upstairs with jugs of hot water—a good deal of noise and clatter of tongues. I had been in the house before, but had never assisted at such a noisy *réunion* as Maurice appeared to have assembled to-night.

"They code not stan' before our a'mighty fitin' boys, not nohow, sir. Talk ev yer Bonayparts, or yer Cæsars, or that degenerate Arther Wellington! Creation! I tell yer, gentlemen—and yeu may believe me as safe as I am Colonel Cornelius Slattery—there never wair and never wall be a greater fitin' giniral than Giniral Scott! No whar on the airth can you find troops to withstand the impetewous nater of the chyldren ev the Stars and Stripes!"

The speaker was a lean little man, with a cadaverous aspect. His face betokened a Milesian origin, which was further betrayed by the intonation of his speech. He held a glass in one hand and a pipe in the other, with which he described circles in the air, in illustration of some argument addressed to a group of young men at the end of the table.

"But, Colonel Slattery, that may be all true," rattled out Bolton, "and yet it does not prove you are not as great tyrants as any in

the world. Why do you set on those poor devils of Mexicans, and call on us to applaud you, whilst you condemn European nations for similar acts?"

"Ev yew will jist understand the trew principils ev our institutions, ye'll see, Mester Bolton, that it's for the good of the human race for us to whip the Mexicans. We were bound to do it, sir, in the interest ev civilization"—(a wave of the pipe)—"ev hewmanity"—(another wave)—"ev—ev, as I might add, ev Congress—and ev them poor cusses of Mexicans themselves."

"But that is the very thing, I say. By giving your motives fine names you don't disguise the facts. You have been inveighing against the English government and people here, and against all the governments of Europe for tyranny and oppression, and yet you have exterminated the Indians from their lands, and have made war against every nation you could reach."

"What do you mean by reach? I guess, sir, Paul Jones, and Decatur, and McDonough reached perty far. We mean to try if we can't reach further some day——"

"There's no doubt of it," interrupted Bolton. "You could only get at the Mexicans, and you bullied them. I think your eagle is just a degenerate type of the European birds which afflict humanity on this side of the Atlantic, as your puma is an American edition of the lion of the Old World."

"Sir," exclaimed Colonel Slattery, breaking his pipe in emphasis on the table, "these air expressions which entoirely deprives——"

At this moment Maurice Prendergast interrupted the Colonel's speech to present him to me and a new comer—a sleek, fat man of very dark complexion. The Colonel bowed and shook me by the hand with effusion; but his face darkened as he marked the hue of the oily little stranger, and he put his hands behind his back in a resolute attitude.

"No, Mr. Prendergast, sir!—not if you please; Colonel Slattery's hand is not given to a nigger—not if he was lord mayor of London."

"I assure you, Colonel Slattery, this is a most distinguished Indian gentleman—a lover of freedom—a citizen of the world—Prince Rustum Sing—one of the oldest families of Hindostan. I hope you will recall your words."

At the word "Prince," Colonel Slattery removed both hands with a jerk, and seizing the fingers of the little man, whose anger could scarcely be concealed beneath his smiles and bows, said, as he wrung them—"Prince Rustum, I'm glad to know yew! I love them as loves liberty and fer-reedum, all over the airth; and I respect princes who act as such. I'm a gentleman and a Colonel

myself, and if ever yew come to my country, Prince, I'll be glad to introduce yew to our President and senators."

The Colonel's civilities were terminated by a summons to supper. The "Prince," who seemed very ill at ease, sat next Maurice, the Colonel at the other side, and I down at the end of the table among some college men, whom I recognised as the ultras of a debating society outside the College walls, which I had once attended in company with Maurice. The storm raged outside. It was one of those evenings when a morose and quarrelsome mood seems to be in the air, and wine turns hot in the head and fiery in the heart. Our host drank deeply; and he, Bolton, and the American Colonel were soon engaged in warm discussion. At my end of the table the conversation, if it could be called so, referred to political matters, in which I was little interested.

"Who are these odd people Prendergast has got here to-night?" I inquired of my neighbour, who happened to be a quiet-looking young fellow I had seen with a sizar's gown at chapel.

"They're pathriots of various counthries, attrhacted here by our sthruggle for freedom. They've come to study the Repale movement. But they only see the beginning of what is about to be——"

"Shannavan's song—Shannavan's song!" burst out a chorus of voices. My friend cleared his throat and sang. A sweet, sonorous voice rolled out the burning verses of poetical deification of "the men of '98." The chorus was taken up by every voice but mine, and Bolton's song followed. The Prince had to be sent away to his hotel—the Colonel could only blink his eyes fiercely at the nearest candle and utter war-whoops at intervals. At last, a young man got up unsteadily, and, with thickened utterance, proposed "The glorious memory of Irish Rebellion."

I rose and exclaimed—"I will not sit here to listen to treason;" and, amidst a storm of yells and groans, walked into the hall, and was about leaving, when Maurice came out with face flushed.

"You have called my friends traitors, Terence Brady. I consider that an honourable name; but by it you intended to insult them in my own house. I shall hold you responsible."

"Wherever and whenever you like. It is I whom you have insulted by asking me to meet such people; and I shall hold you responsible for the affront they have put on me."

A flash of lightning, as he stood in the doorway, showed the angry frown on Maurice's brow; the thunder crashed outside. I rushed out into the night; the rain fell, but I heeded it not, as I strode down the narrow lane. Under the trees, by the wall, I perceived three men, who appeared to be seeking refuge from the storm.

"It's a fine night," said one, as I passed.

I took no notice, and walked on ; footsteps plashed after me on the sloppy road. It was in no fear that I ran. I was young, fleet of foot, and active, and it suited my humour to try my speed.

"Stop !" shouted a voice behind me, "we want to speak to you."

I held my peace, pressed my hat on my brows, bounded along the path, turned by the sea-wall, and at full speed started towards Dublin. Through the tumult of the rain and storm I heard the heavy breathing of my pursuers, and the tramping of their feet. I increased my speed, shortened my stick in my grasp. In a few minutes I looked over my shoulder. There was a good runner among them ; two of the men had fallen out of sight in the darkness, but one kept steadily along, and was only some forty or fifty yards behind me.

What were they—robbers ? It was not probable ; they would scarcely attack a man within a few yards of a house full of people, which he could have reached in a moment had he turned the other way at first. "It is a fine night !" Could that be some watch-word ? At any rate, my fine fellow, you will have to put on more steam to catch me, I promise you.

Through the rain and blinding lightning the chase continued. We were nearing the bridge. At that hour, and in such a night, not a soul was abroad. Half a mile further lay the streets of the city. I felt half angry for having run at all ; but the trial of speed once begun, I resolved to go on with it. I put on a spurt, and gained the end of a lonesome street. The lamp-light on the pavement made it shine like glass far ahead, and no shadow moved on its surface. Just crossing the bridge behind me came my pursuer. Suddenly there stepped a figure swiftly from the recess of a doorway, and barred my path. What possessed me I knew and cared not. I dashed his arm aside, and sped on, though my heart was beating, and my breath came short and thick. The policeman's heavy boots clattered along in the chase. Turning down another street, I perceived a car standing before the door of one of the gambling-houses which then infested Dublin. The driver stood under cover of the doorway. I leaped up on the car—

"To the College—quick as you can !" I shouted.

"I can't, yer honner ! I'm engaged by a gintleman inside."

"It's a fine night ! He can walk."

The man's manner changed at once.

"The day will be finer !" he said, with a significant gesture, leaped on his seat, and with a cut of the whip started the sleeping horse on its journey.

Just as he did so the door opened, and I saw by the light of the lamp a man emerge whose figure was that of Fraser.

"There's the gintleman!" said Pat. "It's five shillings yer honner would have to give me if I charged you the fare I've lost; but you're one of the raal sort, and sorra a policeman shall touch you this night, any way."

Away through the rain and muddy streets—a faint rattle sounded in the distance as we turned the corner.

"Rattle till ye break yer elbow, my lad! Hurroo!"

The lamps flew past us; in a few minutes the man drew up his panting horse outside the College gate, with "A long life to yer honner!"

I thundered at the door. The porter, as he took down my name, stared at my drenched and muddy clothes and flushed face.

"I have had a row, M'Cormack. If any one asks for my name presently, don't give it up."

There was one way of securing M'Cormack's fidelity.

"Is it the polis?" he asked, as he looked at the coin.

"I don't know—maybe it is."

"All right, sir."

A significant grin assured me M'Cormack, as he retired to his den behind the gate, believed me deeply implicated in hostilities with the new constabulary.

I was soon asleep, but a wild dream of assassins and conspirators, in which Fraser, my mother, and Maurice, were strangely mixed up, vexed my slumbers, though I did not wake till it was late in the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NIGHT'S WORK.

THERE'S a nate job in 'Saunders' this morning," observed Phinny Codd, as he laid the breakfast; "a gintleman bate to death, and a polisman kilt."

"Where, Phinny?"

"Ah, thin, quite convaynient—nigh Summer Hill, no less. An iligant time the blackguards had for it. You must have been out in the thick of the storm, too; and I'm doubtin' if them new dhress throwers 'l ever be made dacent, the way they were left in this blessid day."

I took up the paper, and read—

"APPALLING OUTRAGE.—At two o'clock this morning, as Sergeant Whack was proceeding on his rounds, he discovered the lifeless body of a gentleman on the pavement, near a notorious house in Burnett Street. He was bleeding from a wound in the side of the head from a stick or large stone, and, on summoning assistance, the sergeant, going a short way up the same street, was horrified to find Constable Doody, on whose beat it was, lying insensible from a terrible injury in the head also. With the aid of the police, who were called to the scene, the stranger and the constable were conveyed to the station, where the surgeon dressed their wounds. The unfortunate gentleman is, it has been ascertained, an officer of rank and distinction in the East India Company's service, named Fraser, at present on a visit to our city, and residing with his daughter at Morrison's Hotel, whither he has been conveyed in a litter. He had a large sum of money on his person, which is untouched. Both he and the constable are in a precarious state, and at this very hour not the slightest clue has been found or suggested to account for this appalling crime in our peaceable and quiet community."

What horrible tale was this? It was frightful to think that I had been close to the scene of such a tragedy! Merciful Heaven! if suspicion should fall upon me! I was running as if in flight—the carman—the porter! It was too terrible to let my mind dwell on the picture. In a few minutes and I was at the hotel. Sir Philip was just coming down the stairs.

"How is the Colonel, sir?"

"It is a severe blow. A slight concussion of the brain, I fear; but there is no fracture. How do you know Colonel Fraser?"

"Why, sir, I dined with him last night, and left him to go to a supper at Clontarf. Colonel Fraser was a friend of my father, and after my father's death married my mother, and that is how he came to call on me."

"I never heard of the marriage before," said Sir Philip. "At all events, you cannot see him now. I have stayed the poor young lady's tears—a pretty, sensitive creature. There is really no absolute danger—none. He is sensible, and I hope to find him better when I return. Lecture at three o'clock, remember."

And he drove off as I turned from the door. The best thing I could do was to go to Mr. Bates. He was busy with his papers, and did not perceive my pale and agitated face.

"Well, Terry, what news? How goes on the work? Dissect! dissect! dissect! Well, it's better to have such a task than to

spend your life hunting out the secret meanness, fraud, and wickedness of mankind."

He stared with open eyes as I told him what had occurred.

"My God! how glad I am you came to me! Why, they might get up a most damning case against you! Come off with me at once. We must see the police magistrate immediately."

Mr. Blood, the terror of pugnacious coal-porters and disorderly collegians, was in his private room taking all evidence that could be afforded by the police concerning the outrage. There was little to take, except what the sergeant and the constables who came up after the alarm was given, could tender; and when Mr. Bates introduced me as a witness who might throw some light on the affair, the magistrate assumed an attitude of marked attention. I told my story to the end. Mr. Blood looked at me in silence.

"This is a strange account you give, Mr. Brady," he said, after a time. "Would you know the car-boy again?"

"Certainly."

"Where were you supping?"

"At Mr. Maurice Prendergast's, 16, Charlemont Terrace."

"And when did you leave? Were there any of the company behind you?"

"About a quarter past one o'clock, or somewhat later, I should think. I was one of the first to leave."

"You say there were three men as if hiding under the demesne wall when you passed, and when they said, 'Stop!' you ran on? Why did you not run back towards the house if you thought they intended robbery and violence?"

"I can scarcely say. I had not parted with my host on very good terms, and without knowing why, I resolved to give the fellows a run."

"Without knowing who they were? They might have been a police patrol, eh?"

"As I have said, I can't tell why I ran, but I did so. I distanced all but one, and he was a steady, strong runner. I could see he had something in his hand."

"Were you armed in any way?"

"I had only a thick stick—a blackthorn; here it is. I don't usually carry it, but as I intended to walk home that night, I took it out in my hand."

"And you dined with the unfortunate gentleman who is the victim of this outrage?"

"I did."

"Did you agree to meet him at any place later in the evening?"

"No ; I did not."

"Why did you not stop to take him up when you saw him coming out of the house in the rain ?"

"I can scarcely say. I deeply regret it. I had taken his car, and there was some unaccountable impulse upon me."

"The policeman who tried to stop you came, you say, out of the doorway of a house near the bridge : where was the man then ? And why did you not stop when you saw it was a constable ? You would have then been quite secure against violence."

"I had no fear of violence—it never entered into my head ; and just as I started off at first from the other fellows, I, as I suppose from bravado, and having taken too much wine, ran from the police."

"You heard the constable running. Can you say what the man did who had been after you ?"

"No, sir."

"Sergeant Whack, can you tell me how far from the bridge Constable Doody was found ?"

"It was full six hundred yards, or perhaps more, your worship. At half-past one o'clock Constable Doody would have been just about the end of the bridge to meet the man on duty by the canal."

"And how far was he lying from Colonel Fraser ?"

"About a hundred yards, your worship."

"It is a most singular story," said Mr. Blood after a pause. "We will swear you to your information, and I will take Mr. Bates's word for your appearance. It is quite evident that, however innocently, you have caused, or rather you might have prevented, a shocking crime. There can be no doubt that man, or he and his comrades, committed these most murderous assaults ; but their motive is beyond our reach at present. How is the constable going on, Sergeant Whack ?"

"Dr. Tuson says he fears there's crackter of the skull ; but he's sensible now, your worship."

"You have not a trace of these men ?"

"Not one, your worship—not the smallest."

"Well, you must leave no stone unturned. Look out for the carman, and let him and the college porter be here at the next examination, which will take place as soon as anything turns up. I shall go to the Castle, Bates, and advise the Government to issue a large reward. Mr. Brady will do all he can to assist the police by identifying the carman and the man or men whom he saw hiding. It is strange why they pursued him so pertinaciously, and why he ran on when all danger was over. It is

altogether a most curious case, Bates, most curious! Only for your ward's respectability I must say there would be some suspicions attaching to him. Oh, don't start, sir; I don't mean of the gravest kind, but of a nature to authorize me to hold you in heavy bail."

We took our leave and walked towards the college.

"Is it not very odd that this Colonel Fraser should be so set upon?" said my guardian. "If his money had been taken, we might have fixed on some of the ruffians in the gambling-house he had left."

"Might not the policeman have disturbed them, sir?"

"I thought of that, but you see his money was safe, and the policeman was rendered insensible. I can't make it out. Let us hope for the best. They will both recover, please God! and we shall find the villains at last."

As I entered the gate the porter on duty told me Mr. Bolton had been inquiring for me, and that the gyp had let him into my room, where he was waiting for me. "He didn't like being seen in the court—small blame to him!"

Dick Bolton was waiting for me indeed; his face swollen and flushed, over one blackened eye a recent cut, covered with black plaster; his hair uncombed, his clothes muddy and torn.

"Look at this, Terence!" he exclaimed, pointing to his eye. "See what a ruffian blow Maurice Prendergast gave me after you left. Will you be my friend? I must have satisfaction, and nothing but one thing can wipe away that blood!"

In broken, agitated accents he told me how the carouse had gone on after I had left, and how Maurice, deep in his cups, had branded him and me as "unworthy Irishmen"—or some such phrase, he couldn't remember what—but at all events, angry words were spoken. Bolton at last was struck by Maurice, and was taken off furious and struggling by the more sober students who stopped the conflict.

No time must be lost—no apologies would do. He was furious, and burst into tears in his rage. I told him that Prendergast and I had had words, and that it would scarcely be proper in me to take a message, as I had an affair of my own on hand.

"The very reason!—you can meet him afterwards; he can't refuse me first. Terence, this blow will drive me mad!"

There was a knocking at the inner door, and to my astonishment Colonel Slattery walked in, passing Phinny Codd with a wave of authority, as he sought to arrest his progress. His beard was trimmed into the form of a thick wedge, pendant from his chin and throat; his cheeks clean shaven, so that the exact position of

the piece of tobacco in his jaw could be traced as the Colonel champed it as a boar crunches a rabbit. A large diamond glittered in his shirt-front; a black satin waistcoat, black coat, and black dress trousers; a white tie and gloves, and patent leather boots, gave him the appearance of a waiter *en grande tenue*, or of an undertaker's man on a holiday.

"I hev come on the part ev my friend, Mr. Prendergast, to deliver this cart-ell, and to await your reply. Your servant, Mister Bolton. That's a perty bad woound over the eye, yev got. Hev yew tried an iced dollar on it? In my practice I've found it a perty certain thing."

The note ran thus :—

"MY DEAR BRADY,—I have been thinking over what occurred last night, and hope you will accept the assurance of my very sincere regret for any offence I may have offered you in a moment of excitement. Of course, after I have said so much, it remains for you to decide whether an old acquaintance, which on my side has long been friendship, should cease or not. I do not mind confessing to you that I was not in my right mind last night. Our company was badly sorted; and I have had a serious quarrel with Bolton, in which I believe I was very wrong, though I cannot make that admission to him. In fact, you are the only man in college whom I would care to propitiate. I will even apologize to you formally, if you like. I had to take your words on my back after you left, I think; and it was only by asking others I learned they did not know what passed at the door.

"Yours truly,

"M. P."

"I will answer this letter myself, Colonel Slattery. I wish you a good morning."

The Colonel did not seem inclined to go.

"Ef I might suggest to Mister Bolton that he should get his eye in order for any difficulty that might arise? an iced dollar now——"

"Colonel Slattery," I interrupted, "we are both much occupied at present. I shall not trouble you to wait for any reply to Mr. Prendergast's letter, but will send it by my servant. Good morning, sir."

I stood at the door, while the Colonel sidled out awkwardly, and with some remark about "an iced dollar's the thing whar thar's infimination," took his departure.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DUEL.

IN the days when I was at College duels were rare, but the traditions of the art and practice, nourished occasionally by accounts of secret encounters between angry rivals or political opponents on "The Bull" or in the Phoenix, still lived. Now and then indeed an orthodox, substantial affair of honour occurred beyond all doubt, but dead shots had become very scarce; and when, after a period of seclusion from society, Captain O'Daisy came out on the world with a limp and a stick, or Tom French was seen with his arm in a sling, it was considered generally that a step had been made back to the good old times, though no one would like to swear that O'Daisy had not sold the race for which he got horsewhipped, or that Tom French had behaved well to the young lady whose brother had winged him. On the whole, it was thought rather a fine thing to have been "out," and certainly no one dared to refuse a request for a pistol promenade on the turf if he desired to stand well with his friends.

"The air is becoming very thick about you, Master Terence," said I to myself, as I set out on my errand. "Here is a new phase in that history of one whom, in life or death, honour or dishonour, you cannot shake off; this Fraser turns up, and in some inscrutable way you become almost an actor in the horrors of that night. You have an affair of police on hand; you are engaged in a duel, promoting the death of one or other of your friends—that will be another police business! Then will come expulsion from College. What a plague you are to all around you! You cannot take a cruise to sea but you involve every one in trouble and distress; at school you are never out of scrapes. As you grow older you seem to get worse. You are now on a wicked errand, if you carry it out. What would Mary Butler say?"

(Here I felt a little lump rise in my throat, and paused to consider the question.)

"Why, of course, she would say, 'Terence couldn't refuse his friend!' Would she, though?—particularly if she knew how the quarrel arose. What shall I do? Tell Mr. Bates? No. He was out with old Tandy, the proctor, long ago, and they often celebrate the event over their claret; but now he would inform the police, raise the College, and get me into discredit. Hang Dick Bolton!—why did he select me? He has lots of friends who would be delighted."

And so I pondered, arguing against every step I took, but taking it still, and moving on "because I could not help it ;"—and if I could not, who could ?

"And so you have come to ask me," said Maurice Prendergast, "to give Dick Bolton a meeting? You know," he added with a bitter smile, "this is very informal. But I will not stand on ceremony. I am really sorry for what has happened, but I can't say so ; and now he wants me to try and shoot him by way of satisfaction, or to let him shoot me for the wrong I have done to him. I have behaved like a savage, but I can't do anything but fight. If by moving a hair's-breadth right or left I could avoid this quarrel now, I would not stir, because I dare not. I must give him his satisfaction, and you have only to arrange with Considine when and where it's to be."

Mr. Pat Considine was older than any of us, and on the reputation acquired by two years' service in a regiment of Austrian cuirassiers—ere for some inscrutable purpose he entered College—was much resorted to for advice in delicate matters by the young men of his party. He was greatly admired for a way he had of clanking the heels of his boots together when he made a bow, and was distinguished by saluting casual acquaintances in a way which made their blood boil owing to its intense civility.

Mr. Considine was unusually bland and courteous as I explained my errand.

"I've had an idaya of this already ; and as there could be only one way to settle it, I've made arrangements to shoot your conveyance. The Phaynix is dangerous, and them cockle garls are prowlin' about the Boll at all hours, and might disturb us. Whawt do you say to go-an' to the back of Kilbarrack churchyard? My man and I could shlip out of his lodgin's and shtroll out there at foive o'clock, widout any one bein' the wiser ; and yer frind and yerself cud shleep at a hotel, and get up airly be way of takin' the mail to some place. There's no need of a surgin, I suppose ; but if you like, our mewtewal frind Ringbone cud be talked to. What do ye say?"

I said, with obsequiousness, it would be best to have Ringbone in attendance.

"Ye'r right. It's kew-rious how bul'ts will go sthravagin' and hittin' fellows sometimes. An' ye'll bring yer own pishtels. Good mornin' to ye, Mr. Brady. At foive ! Kilbarrack church."

Was it all a dream? No. There is Pat Considine clanking his heels at the outer door. How red and pale I got as I met my tutor in the square, and had to tell him all about my escape from the ruffians who had assaulted Colonel Fraser and the policeman.

"I am not astonished at your trepidation even now, as you recall these singular events," quoth my tutor. "You ought to be very thankful—very, indeed. No doubt the perpetrators will be rendered amenable to justice. See what late hours and dangerous companions expose one to, and shun them in future. Good morning."

What are you engaged in now, Terence Brady?

One word to that tall, unconscious, sympathetic old gentleman might alter your destiny and change the current of your friend's life. Out with it!—speak! I could not because I would not.

Bolton opened the door for me. I found on his table what Mr. Considine had called "a felewt case," and two of the longest-barrelled pistols I had ever seen.

"I have been home to get them," he said, "and had to tell such an awful lie to my mother as an excuse for getting the key of my father's study. They were her brother's, and the nick you see on the stock of that one was put when he shot Mr. Fellowes. I will take care there shall be no second nick if I can help it. You cannot imagine how miserable my poor uncle was at the end of his days for shooting that man. He used to howl like a maniac at nights, and had a look in his eyes sometimes that was frightful."

Poor Dick gave a small shiver as he spoke. He listened to my account of the arrangements for the meeting.

"It is only right," he said, "to prepare for anything that may arise. I have been a very bad fellow. If I go down, my dear old *mater* will have one great grief to swallow up all the small sorrows I have caused her. Terence, I shall just shut myself up—not to commune with my own heart, as they say, but to write a few words and set this ragged cabin of mine in order. And so good-bye till seven o'clock—at Lacken's."

There was a sense of importance about me as I laid aside my cap and gown and walked through the College gates, on my way to Morrison's Hotel. I wonder do great criminals, as they brood over some deed of horror, and feel it assuming definite purpose and shape within them, experience an exultation at the thought that they are about to step out of obscurity and become marked among men? I know, as I looked in people's faces, I heard a voice within saying, "How little they know what you are going to do! How they would turn and stare at you if they were aware you were going to be a second in a duel to-morrow!"

There was a crowd round Morrison's door, and as I approached I saw Rustum "the Indian Prince" sitting inside an old post-chaise loaded with luggage. He turned his head when he caught

my eye. Why, I could not tell, nor did I care to inquire, for I was by no means proud of his acquaintance.

Colonel Fraser is so much better, the porter told me, "that he has been able to see the Indian Prince that's leaving us, thank God." "Miss Fraser left word if you called you were on no account to go away without sending up your name."

A "hurroo!" from the crowd, as the carriage, followed by a car, crowded with native servants, drove off from the door, drowned my excuses, and the porter ran upstairs to announce me ere I could say I must go away.

"Step up, sir, if you please," called the waiter over the banisters. "Miss Fraser will be glad to see you."

"Very glad indeed," repeated the soft voice. "Papa, thank God, is so much better. His poor head still aches, and he has noises in it, and lights flashing in his eyes; but the doctors say he has recovered wonderfully, and in a few days he will be himself again. He has asked after you several times—I must tell him you are here."

She was going towards the door, when I exclaimed, "No; I beg of you. Not now, I entreat, Miss Fraser. It would be better not—better for both of us. Wait till to-morrow. I could not bear to see him now."

"Oh! he is not so dreadful to look at, Mr. Brady. I'm sure, if you knew how anxious he is to see you, there would be no objection on your part."

"But, indeed, I would rather not. It would agitate him, perhaps. Let me speak to you first, I implore you."

Mabel Fraser looked at me wonderingly; closed the door, and, walking to the chair where I was seated, took my hand, and gazing into my face with her clear soft eyes, said slowly—"I am sure there is nothing you can have to say to me I ought not to hear. So I will just sit and listen obediently as you tell me. Well?"

There was a pause—an awkward one.

"Well?" she repeated. "I have done as you bid me, and am all attention."

"Miss Fraser," I gasped out, "I would not like to see your father just yet. After I dined with you things happened—I——"

"Ah!" she murmured, "such a dreadful night!—The storm kept me awake, and when my father was brought in—oh! such a sight!—my senses nearly left me. But heaven be praised it is no worse! Poor papa! Mr. Brady, he is the noblest creature on earth. I love him better than all the world beside."

Miss Fraser put her handkerchief to her eyes and turned aside her head.

"Do you know," I asked, "where Colonel Fraser was going when he left us?"

"He went out to an evening party, and I was too tired to accompany him. Oh! had I known, would I not have made any sacrifice to have been by his side? He deserves it. Every thought of his heart is for me. We were long separated; for papa at one time was very unhappy. He was very foolish too; but ever since I went out to India to him, except one cloud, which passed away very soon, I have been happy—oh! how happy!—with him always."

"And that cloud was——"

"A cloud, and nothing more. It is gone, and with it the shadows it cast over us. But it is I who am speaking, and you who are the listener! Let us reverse the parts, please."

"Then let me speak. After I left you I saw your father."

Mabel Fraser turned her head and scanned my face with a quick steady look—"Saw my father? Well? At Mrs. Latouche's ball?"

"No. Not at Mrs. Latouche's. I was leaving the house of a college acquaintance after midnight, when suddenly three men sprang out and pursued me. We had a long race. One alone kept up with me. A policeman sought to stop me, but I slipped past him, and presently I came to a car waiting outside a house. I leaped on it, and as I did so the door opened, and Colonel Fraser, I am almost sure, came out of the house. For some reason I cannot explain even to myself, I drove away and left him. We heard the policeman spring his rattle, and nothing more. I got to College, and in the morning heard of the outrage."

"Then had you not taken the car papa would have escaped?" exclaimed Miss Fraser. "What an unfortunate circumstance for us all, Mr. Brady!"

"You do not ask me, Miss Fraser, where this took place?"

"Well really, Mr. Brady, it is a point which is not of the smallest consequence to me. I do not know one street in Dublin from the other. But Colonel Fraser," she added, coldly, "has several acquaintances here, and it is not my habit to ask him where he visits. I believed when he dressed and went out he was going to one or two different places."

The Nabob does not make his daughter his confidante, or she keeps her counsel well. There was a pause for a few seconds.

"I met the Indian prince, whom I perceived just now driving away from the door, the same evening."

"An Indian prince!" she repeated. "And who was that, Mr. Brady?"

"Rustum Sing, a friend of Colonel Fraser's."

"Rustum Sing!—a prince," she exclaimed, with a scornful laugh. "Why he was once one of our servants—a khitmutgar, or butler, and had no idea of being a Sing or a Lion of any kind. He became contractor for the army, and has come over about a claim against the Government. Hearing papa was here, he followed him from England, to get evidence for his great lawsuit. Rustum a prince! that is really very funny."

"He was carrying off some of your father's portmanteaux. I saw several marked, 'Major A. C. Fraser,' on the roof of his carriage."

"Probably old ones we gave him, or which he stole when he was in our service," observed Miss Fraser. "But there is papa's bell. Do let me tell him you are here." And she went out of the room in her quiet noiseless way. She returned in a few moments.

"My father is inclined to sleep," she said; "I have not said anything about your being here, and we will defer your visit till to-morrow. But promise you will not fail us then. I am going to sit in his room, as he says he feels better when I am by his side. Do you know, Mr. Brady, I am not in the least anxious about these would-be assassins. What matters who they were? All I wish now is, that my father may get well soon, and that we may leave Ireland! Good day."

Punctual as men usually are when their time becomes of uncertain tenure, Dick Bolton drove up to Lacken's at seven o'clock with his carpet-bag, which was deposited in that horrid outrage on civilization a double-bedded room, beside the portmanteau which Phinny Codd, as a make-believe, had been ordered to prepare for a visit of a couple of days to the country.

"In the middle of terrum, too, bedad, sow-et 'tis," Mr. Codd ruminated, as he was packing. "Mr. Bates and the chewthre will be mighty put out if they come to larn y'er gone."

Dinner was ordered in the coffee-room, and as we entered we were aware of the presence, at a table in a remote angle, of an elderly gentleman, the only person in the room, who had apparently finished his banquet, as he was cracking nuts in a loud resonant manner. A tall lean figure, in a blue coat and brass buttons, and yellow vest, surmounted by a red face topped with white hair, not unfamiliar to me.

"And mind! Let the pancakes be hot," added Dick, as Mat the waiter, with a superb sweep, removed the battered plated cover of the soup tureen as if he were unveiling a statue.

"Silence!" shouted a voice, accompanied by the thumping of a nut-cracker on the table. "Silence, I say, over there!"

"Yes, Colonel! It's me that's talkin'!" said Mat, volubly, rolling his eyes, and winking at us with much earnestness, and an air of entreaty, "I won't do it agin." Then, as he pretended to hand round the plates, he whispered—"For the love of the Lord don't mind him, gintlemen! he'll soon have had enough. He's had a pint a' sherry wid his Dublin Bay—and a bottle of Sneyd wid his steak—and a pint a' port wid his marrabones, and that's the third half-pint he's had sinst dinner was over."

"What is he drinking?"

"What is he dhrinkin', yer honner? Ah! the rayal stuff, no less. He takes 'ud in half-pints wid wather, and maybe he'll be ayquil to one more, or maybe two more yet. It's ould Finucane, of the county Sligo. And he'll be up walkin' round Stephen's Green at five a'clock tamarra mornin', and shwimmin in the say aftherwards, may be, to kule himself. Take no notis for the Lord's sake, whatever he does!"

It was not easy to follow Mat's advice. Some time later, in the absence of the waiter, as Dick and I were conversing, we were aware that the Colonel had got on his legs, and was approaching us with difficulty, but still with a very evident determination as to his ultimate direction. We went on with our talk, till a bony hand and a blue cuff and brass buttons descended on the table between us with a thump; and then turning our eyes, we saw impending over us the visage of the man of many half-pints of "real stuff."

"Mee opiny'n of you two," he said at once, in a manner impetuously candid, "is that ye're not worth kicking! I appayled to you for silence, as mee nerves couldn't bear the slit'st noise; and ye'r both roaring and shouting a purpess! There's mee kyard!—not that ye'll take any notus—unless p'raps I pull your noses—both of you. And——"

Mat at that moment coming in with a marrow-bone, rushed forward. "Yes, Colonel! I tould them to be quiet. They're rayal gentlemen, and will be bound to give you satisfaction whin you come back. There's a message, Colonel, just come in to Mr. Lacken to say yer wanted at the Kildare, to settle a row there's goen on there betune Mr. O'Shay and Captain Power. They'll not give in to any man in Eye'erland but yerself."

The Colonel, ignorant of Mat's winks and faces, was evidently

much mollified. His features relaxed—"Ye didn't do it a purpess? And ye're gentlemen? Then, if ye'll apollygise when I come back I'll retract everything." He tried to look dignified. "At present I'm called away to adjust a little matter. I'll make them fight if I can: it prevents ill blood. I'm afraid of that little Power, though. It will be hard to dhraw him."

And, muttering to himself, he walked, with the assistance of the waiter, as far as the hall, when he received another message to say the quarrel was arranged, whereupon he took another half-pint and then took himself off to bed, by the aid of many legs and arms.

"No use, Dick, in a Spartan slave after that Sligo Colonel! And to think the business we are engaged upon may be traced to the same cause!"

I am sorry to say, nevertheless, that there was somehow a secret elevation about us as if we were much finer fellows than we should have been if we had not to get up so early.

"I shall not fire at him to hit him," quoth Dick, "although he so insulted me. I am no great hand with firearms anyway: I once shot at a crow and missed it."

Kilbarrack Church is in ruins. It stands near the sea shore, a few miles outside Dublin. The wall which once surrounded the graveyard is broken down, the cattle stray in at pleasure to nip the rich herbage which crops up above the heads of those who are taking their rest. The monumental tablets and stones are broken, defaced, overgrown with weeds.

As we dismissed the car, which had been engaged over night, at some distance from the clump of trees which marked the ruin, the driver, with a knowing look, asked—"Do you want a clerk for early morning mass in the ould church beyant? I could lave the mare here fasthened up by the hedge, and I'd be proud to carry the prayer-books that you've got in the little box there for yer honner."

The placid beauty of the early morning, the twittering of the birds in the bushes, the whistle of the curlew as he rose from the sea-bordered meadow, the lowing of the herds half buried in the deep grass, were not in unison with our little affair." As we came near the churchyard I made out the figures of three men standing inside the ruined porch—the business of the hour asserted itself.

"I see Prendergast, Considine, and the doctor—at least, I suppose the third man is the medico. No; I declare it's the American colonel. What on earth can he be doing here?"

Our salutations were studiously polite, and the bows that Con-

sidine made, and the way he clacked his heels as he stood on a gravestone and received us at the entrance, would have produced a sensation in any court in Germany.

"Colonel Slattery is here, gentlemen, in consequence of the medical friend mewtewally selected being engaged in attending a lady in the sthraw, and as the gallent officer has studied medicine"—Colonel Slattery nodded—"in the most ayminint schools, and was good enough to perpose to come with us, I thawt I might venture to attach him to our little party on this intheresting occasion. Have you had much expayrience in this work?" inquired Mr. Considine *sotto voce* when we had measured our fifteen paces. "No? Then perhaps you would not think me intherusive if I asked you to put in two dhrams of powder with my pishtels. It's marked on the flashk. They throw high with more; but they take all that. Any particulars you'd like attended to with these? Thank you. I think our men are very well placed. Will you give the word or shall I? I! Much obliged to you, sir."

We took our places, all but the Colonel, who had mysteriously disappeared.

I posted Bolton, according to the tradition, with his flank to the enemy; but I fancied I had never seen him so stout as he looked that morning, and wished I could have compressed him a little. Behind him was a patch of the old wall, where the ground was clear of gravestones.

Maurice Prendergast, with arms folded, stood with his back to the ruin. The pistols were handed to the two young men, and Dick as I retired gave me a cheerful nod. Mr. Considine's politeness was now of the intensest, most ballet-master overpoweringness, and he planted himself in his place beside an old tree, as if he were the only man on the ground and had all the duel to himself.

"Wan!" he called out in a clear voice, which rang through the ruins. "Tew!" he shouted still louder. I felt my heart stop. "Foire!" he said sharply, after a pause which seemed an age. I saw the arms levelled as Maurice and Dick Bolton looked for an instant towards each other. The reports were almost simultaneous. I saw Prendergast start, the pistol drop from his grasp, and a stream of blood rush through his fingers as he put his hand to his face. As I ran towards him, Colonel Slattery, with a horrible yell, bounded from behind a gravestone, shouting—"I'm a dead man!" and fell on the grass.

"I declare to you, if I were at the foot of the throne of mercy this moment," gasped out Bolton, on his knees before Maurice,

glancing from him to me with a most sorrowful air, "I never—never aimed—never intended to go near you."

"That's the way people are oftenest hit. It's a dangerous practice, Mr. Bolton," quoth Mr. Considine. "But, for the life of me, I can't think how the Colonel got grazed."

Dick Bolton's bullet striking a tombstone, had glanced in a jagged mass, and had inflicted a disfiguring and most terrible-looking wound on Maurice's cheek. Maurice's ball had found out the lurking-place of the gallant Slattery behind an ancient tomb, as he crouched in the dock leaves, and had passed down through what he called "the fleshy part of his upper leg."

I was busily engaged in binding up the injuries. Pat Considine had run off for the carriages. Suddenly a body of men rushed upon us, and I heard Mr. Bates exclaim—

"My God! There is blood! I'm afraid we're too late, after all! There's murder here already! Oh, Terry! Terry! how could you engage in this?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OUTLAW.

THE duel made an unusual sensation in Dublin, but the powers that be were content with heavy recognizances, and a languid trial in which the Crown could procure no witnesses, except Colonel Slattery, who was turned inside out by the terrible cross-examination of our counsel, Mr. Bruiser, Q.C. So we were acquitted, amid much enthusiasm. Colonel Fraser left the city with his daughter the day after our arrest, and we saw by a notice in a local paper that he had remained for a couple of days at the "Desmond Arms," Kilmoyle; but he passed through Dublin on the very eve of the trial, and sent me a note with the expression of a hope that we might meet in India.

"You cannot forget," he added, "I am bound to feel an interest in you, as you now know and feel you have long indulged in very injurious misconceptions, which had been happily removed."

I did not regret his departure. I had conceived for the man a most bitter and intense dislike. Although the time of my wayward grief had been lived down, I could scarcely revert to the miseries of my early life without a sickness of heart; and his utter indifference to me, and the way in which he spoke of "her," as I had learned to call my mother, had aroused in me a feeling

of great antipathy. All I hoped was I might never see him more.

The police could not find out any clue to the midnight outrage. One constable "stated" he remarked three persons, one very dark, like a foreigner, the other two with the air of seafaring men, loitering about the gambling-house, but they went away about eleven o'clock. Constable Doody deposed, that as he was on his beat two hours later he heard the sound of men running, and stood in a doorway to watch. The foremost, on being challenged, leaped to one side and continued his flight, and immediately afterwards a second man, smaller and sligher, rushed past him also. He pursued them both, and heard a car drive away from the door of Morris's gambling-house just as a gentleman came out, who seemed to stop the second man, and was suddenly felled to the ground by him. At that moment, as he was springing his rattle, he was struck from behind, and he remembered no more.

The whole story was no more than a nine days' wonder; then it died out of men's minds, for there were great troubles coming on the land, and long years passed ere the doings of that night were unfolded to me, as I shall relate by-and-by.

My good old guardian, Mr. Bates, had been obliged to go abroad owing to his failing health, and had abandoned business; but I was cheered by his letters. "Sir Richard is here," he wrote from Wiesbaden; "going fast, I think; your friend Mary has grown one of the most beautiful girls ever you saw: whoever gets her will have a treasure whether she carries Kilmoyle with her or not; and, indeed, what with Sir Richard's extravagance in the old days, and the pretty state they've got that unfortunate country into, it is very little there will be left to the Desmonds soon. Gerald Desmond, the young fellow that's in the Guards, Lord help us, is over here, and won't be long till he spends all the money he has except what is lodged for his commission. He is a good-looking lad, but not so handsome as that wild scamp of a father of his who died before you remember. I am sorry to say that the same story which applies to Kilmoyle is good for Lough-na-Carra—from bad to worse. Pass your examination as soon as you can, Terry, my boy; you will soon be of age, and the moment you pass there's your berth ready for you. Miss Butler begs to be remembered to you—'Doctor Brady,' as she calls you; she defends you against Major Turnbull, who says he would sooner be in the ranks than serve as a doctor. 'So,' says she, 'I will tell your dear friend and comforter, Herr Professor Wagermann, that he ought to have entered the Nassau Dragoons instead of philandering about Wiesbaden, and that in future you

will have nothing to do with doctors.' She became quite enthusiastic on the subject, my boy."

I was lonely enough, but I worked all the harder. How I managed to keep out of politics is more than I can account for, except that I agreed with no party, and took it for granted I must be wrong on all points: my *juste milieu*, in fact, was so small I could only stand on it myself.

"Jack Window has been distinguishing himself in his little craft by attacking a pirate flotilla of heavily armed junks in the Chinese seas and destroying them in a most artistic manner. I was almost as glad as he could have been when I read of his promotion to be commander, and his appointment to the *Termagant*:" wrote Standish, who sent me newspapers now and then, and an occasional brief epistle. Standish had married, was going circuit, getting no briefs, but expecting them, and had become the editor of a newspaper, of which he said he "wrote the greater part, including the advertisements."

Maurice Prendergast abruptly quitted college, and I lost sight of him, but I heard that he and his sister were living in the old house near Kilmoyle. The wound which he received caused a deep red scar. One day I was astonished to read an impassioned harangue, which was cited by the paper in which it was reported as a magnificent specimen of eloquence and reasoning.

Wisdom is seldom to be found in the councils of the miserable, and as poverty makes poets—or compels men to write verses—so misery creates orators. The unhappy, the wronged, are eloquent; but eloquence has destroyed more than it has saved, and the great orators of the world stand amid ruins. The many young, and the few elderly, men—honest most of them, foolish many, unpractical all—who vexed heaven with their oratory and raved in prose and verse over the misfortunes of their native land, measured the chances of success only by the grandeur of their words and the strength of their passions. Maurice's eloquence was angry, fervid, like that of a man who is burning with a sense of wrong, all the greater because it was undefined, and who took comfort in covering with biting invective and indignant reproach the supposed author of his humiliation and suffering. His reasoning was admirable, save for the want of any soundness in the premises. He was one of the foremost among the Young Ireland party. The hound was baying at the elephant, and the elephant was preparing to "squench it" at the first step which placed it within reach of its legal proboscis. There had been a famine in Ireland, which was indeed but a sudden and violent augmentation and public exhibition before the world of a normal process which had

been going on in detail for generations. The political economists were quite delighted. They revel in famines ; they expand their wings and float about in the troubled atmosphere as Mother Carey's chickens disport themselves in a cyclone. "See !" they exclaimed, "how beautifully our theory will be proved ! Just watch and observe ! We beg of you not to interfere with the laws of supply and demand ! It is quite certain that if the people can pay for it, food will go to them : if it does not go, and they die in consequence, it only proves that they did not want food, or ought not to get it, and that they deserve to die ! Any attempt to set aside these great principles will prove abortive and ruinous !" They were reminded that on the first appearance—the premonitory symptoms—of the disease which led to this great starvation of the people, the Government, listening only to the voice of humanity, had taken measures to provide food at ordinary rates, and to store it up, so that, sudden as the calamity was, no human beings perished and the sufferings of the hungry were alleviated. "Sheer, downright madness !" they shouted ; "it's rank blasphemy !—it's treason against our science ! Let us stand by and see the harmonious and wholesome working of our great code. Better let myriads perish than violate eternal principles !"

And so it was that though millions of money were spent many thousands of people famished. The survivors attributed the sacrifice to the deliberate purpose of their rulers. The political economists held that if money were to be granted (and it was most liberally poured out from the Imperial Treasury over the land), it should provide the legions of starving paupers with labour solely on the condition that the labour should yield nothing and be worth nothing. There were boards of works devising plans of working so that no work should be done for which there could be a return ; and there were little statesmen racking their small brains to render toil unproductive, and framing circulars and minutes to the end that the army of the poor should be as a flight of locusts—just as useful and no more.

The famine passed away, but it placed an indelible mark on the land. Whilst the multitudes who had escaped the most horrible of deaths were shivering and wondering at their escape, like those who cling to the bank of a torrent and see their kindred perish, the triumphant roar of the great democratic wave which swept over the face of Europe, and submerged thrones and constitutions, reached their ears, and, listening eagerly, they at last began to strain their feeble voices to swell the clamour of the insurgent multitudes. Is it surprising that they hearkened readily to those

who told them if they arose and girt up their loins for the struggle they would arouse the sympathy of the world, and would be enabled to shake off a yoke which they had long been taught to regard as the cause of all their misery? Those who told them so, to be sure, were deceiving or ignorant as themselves; in their reveries they dreamt that one nationality was like another—that what one could do another could do under circumstances totally different. A country gentleman, vain, unwarlike, perverse, and impracticable—some briefless barristers intoxicated by the devotion of their followers—a few ardent journalists, who deemed burning sentences and fervid periods to be potent as volleys of musketry and discharges of grape—weak enthusiasts, who thought that to die for a cause was to gain it—unselfish, but violent, utterly futile, foolish conspirators, who plotted every morning in the newspapers, and held public meetings at night to carry out their secret designs—these, and such as these, joined by the desperadoes who are ever ready to risk the hazard of the die against all odds in any dangerous enterprise, absolutely set to work to wrest Ireland from the dominion of the Crown under which she was ruled hundred of years before Scotland acknowledged its sway, and for a period almost as long as that during which England herself has been subject to it. The whole scheme burst into thin air before a few rounds of ball cartridge. It melted away like the smoke from the policemen's muskets out of the windows of the farm-house at Ballingarry. But as the tiniest jet of flame from the crater tells of the tremendous fires raging below, the outbreak proved that the elements of a fierce eruption were underlying the crust which scarcely warmed to the touch of that expiring flash. The volcano is burning yet. Ever since that time a number of well-meaning people have been toiling up the heaving mountain-side with tin cans and watering-pots, dribbling the contents down the crater by way of extinguishing the flame and quenching the fervid fires.

"Nice times it is indeed," says Phinny Codd. "Here was I tuk up this mornin' for carryin' consayled arrums, and what was it but the blade of the ould knife I scrape the boots wud. The polis swore 'twas a pike-head, when any fool could see the differ——"

"Did you ever see a pike-head, Phinny?"

"Never a raal one, yer honner. I've seen picthers of them; lasteways, things they tould me was pikes, but that was when I was a gossoon, yer honner. The ould Romans I heerd tell—I don't mane the Roman Catholics, ye know—used their pikes and made the lads caper."

"The ould Romans had not to deal with muskets and bayonets, Phinny."

"Oh! I suppose not indeed, yer honner. Well for them it was, too. But a pike does not want catheridges, and it's chape too."

I suspect Mr. Codd knew more about pikes than he liked to admit. He, like every one else, was much excited about "poor Mr. Prendergast," and about politics generally.

"Purty elections they are! It's myself pities those poor English if they has to git out of the members we're sendin' them this time what the boys want over here! Bedad, they'll be trying to insinse them into what they'd like for themselves, and it's little they'll have if they get what they're worth. Why, they couldn't represent themselves properly if they was put to it."

One night, after "the Rebellion of '48" had died out, as I sat reading for my last examination, a tap came to the outer door. I opened it, and Maurice Prendergast stood there. His face was haggard, hard lines seamed his pale thin cheek. The bright red scar heightened the expression of desperation and resolve stamped on his features, as he glanced upon me with bloodshot eyes.

"Terence Brady," said he, "I have come to you for shelter. An hour here may save me."

I took him by the hand, and led him in without a word.

"I suppose you know all?" he exclaimed. "There is a reward upon my head. Our struggle is over for the present. We have been deceived. The miserable wretches have been so trodden down there is no strength or manhood left in them. They have abandoned us to our fate. If it were to save my life a hundred times over, I would not stir a step, but I still live to hope. How long, O Lord!—how long?"

"You are ill, Maurice. You need repose. I will do all I can to save you. For God's sake take some rest now, and we will think of safety to-morrow."

"Ill!" repeated he; "Rest! Yes; God knows, I am ill—sick at heart. Rest I shall never know till my work is done, or I meet the fate of those who have trodden the same path before me. Do you think there is rest even in the grave for those who love their country, and hear, ay, with the cold dull ear of death, her dying groans and the voice of her despair?"

"Maurice, I know that you are deeply compromised, but I believe that even now that vindictive and ferocious Government which you have done your best to overthrow, would freely forgive you if you sought for pardon."

He struck the table with his clenched fist, and, with an oath,

burst out—"Were it to redeem all dear to me from penury, and save my soul from eternal torment, I would not."

I caught the sound of steps on the stairs, coming upwards, and put my finger to my lips. There was a knock at the door.

Maurice's face darkened as he caught my signal, and listened to the footsteps. Putting his hand inside his breast, he drew forth and quietly cocked a pistol, whispering—"They are here ; do not be afraid that I shall do them harm. This is for myself ; I will not be taken alive."

I drew him by the arm to my bedroom.

I took my college gown, and, putting Maurice into my old arm-chair, threw it over him, and dragging the bedclothes off, placed them on the back of it, as though they had been thrown off in a hurry as I was getting out of bed.

The knocking was growing louder. I was in my dressing-gown and slippers. Making a pretence of opening the bedroom door as though it had been shut, I went in great apparent haste to answer the summons.

"Who is there?" I inquired.

"Be good enough to open the door, Mr. Brady. There is an important message for you."

As I turned the key two men in plain clothes glided in, and took possession of my room.

"We beg pardon, sir. It is well known that you are a loyal gentleman, Mr. Brady, but I am compelled to visit you in the discharge of my duty. You know Mr. Maurice Prendergast?"

"I do."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"Before I answer that question, tell me who you are, and by what right you come into my room?"

"We are police constables, and I hold in my hand a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Maurice Prendergast on a charge of high treason. And now, sir, I ask you have you seen him—and if so, when?"

"You have no right to put questions to me. But suppose that I were to tell you that I had seen him—seen him in this room this very night—what then?"

One of the policemen, taking the candle which I had left upon the table, as I was speaking walked round the room, looked into the presses, and at last entered my bedroom.

Maurice's hat lay on a chair near the table—the man's eye rested on it. He cast a quick, sharp glance at me, and then at his chief, as the latter exclaimed—"In this room to-day! You see we were quite right, Corrigan : he is in the College."

"He certainly was, and for all I know may be in the College

now. But my premises are not very extensive, and you can judge for yourself whether he is here or not. I dare say you are aware there are more rooms than mine, and there are many where he is more likely to be than here."

Corrigan returned and glanced at me sharply again as he said—"I can't see any sign of him, Sergeant Brand. Perhaps he may have slipped into the park and got over the wall. There are two more rooms we have got to call on yet."

Sergeant Brand now walked to the bedroom door. He looked under the bed, his hand resting on the very chair as he did so, examined the presses—and saw nothing.

"I suppose, Mr. Brady, there is no use in asking you where Mr. Prendergast went to, for you would not know?"

I replied by a shake of the head. The sergeant took another survey of the room; Constable Corrigan held the candle up the chimney, opened the small pantry again, and shook his head. Then they both shook their heads, looked at each other, and took their departure; but I thought one of them knew more than he cared to make his chief become acquainted with.

Maurice listened till the noise of their footsteps receded in the court below.

"Hide the light, Brady!" he said. "The voice of one sounded familiar to me."

He crept to the window, and by the lamp in the square we could see the dark figures of the police moving along by the wall. At the angle of the square they were met by a man.

"Do you see the scoundrel?—that limping fellow they are speaking to? Don't you recognize him?" asked Prendergast. "See; they are going off together. Well, we may meet again, Mr. Michael Slattery—and if we do——"

"Why put yourself in the power of such wretches? Is it not the old, old story?"

"And if there were no risks, where would be the sacrifices? It is by these we must measure the greatness of our cause."

"Well, but by that measure burglary and robbery, being highly dangerous, thank Heaven, may be held to be great causes by burglars and robbers, at all events——"

"Let us not argue the point. I am about to bid you farewell. If I escape I see you no more, for I cannot live in this wretched and degraded land. My sister, God help her! will join me in the New World, where Ireland is building up a nation. Good-bye, Terence; God bless you!"

He paused for a moment, and by the lamp I saw his features were working in great agitation.

"Terence!" he continued, "there is one thing wrings my heart. Yes! I must tell you, ere I go, we have a common bond in our misery—I love Mary Butler—love her with a madness, all the greater because it is desperate! I tell it to you because your love is as hopeless as my own. No; do not deny it. Love is a fountain of light; no shadow can live in its radiance. Yes! Heaven help us both! When I go I leave my soul behind me! I envy you, because you will tread the unhappy yet blessed soil that is pressed by her foot. But, far as I may be, I shall never lose sight of her! Am I not a happy fellow, Terence Brady?—Twenty-two years of age, a pauper, a proscribed traitor;—in love with two impossibilities—Ireland, and the niece of Richard Desmond of Kilmoyle!"

He laughed bitterly.

"It is happiness, indeed! I almost wish the fellow just now had put his paw upon me. Once I thought you might be a rival, and I hated you. I was only a boy then. Now that you are as hopeless as myself, I pity you—just as you pity me for my devotion to my country. And now for my plunge!"

He opened the door and looked out.

"You will certainly be taken," I cried. "Stay here till the morning, and we will devise some plan—some stratagem——"

"Taken?—never! My plans are all fixed. I must go. They may return and make surer search. Heaven pity you and me! Good night!"

He walked heavily downstairs, and I heard him singing loudly as he walked across the square and turned towards the College park.

I listened till all was still.

"Yes, he is right! I love Mary Butler. I am a fool—an utter, hopeless fool! But can I help it? No;—no more, my good Terence Brady, than you can being six feet high, or having a very soft, womanly, irresolute sort of nature, and excitable to boot, with a tendency to day-dreams, sentiment, and the like. So to bed, sir fool! and wish that poor wretch a safe escape from justice, and pray for your own delivery from bonds which, alas! seem rivetted for ever."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE "DOCTOR'S" DEBUT.

IT is a fine autumn evening, and the breeze, which trifles with straws and dried leaves, and chance poultry feathers, in the parade-ground at Tilbury, can scarcely blow out the folds of the ensign which has been hoisted to do honour to her Majesty's ship *Termagant*, John Window, Esq., commander, just returned from the East Indies, now anchored in the Thames off the Falcon Hotel, to the great delight of the guests at that ancient hostelry, in company with the transports *Mary Brown* and *Anna Maria Jones*, having on board a wing of the "Bengal Tigers." I am sitting in all the glories of an assistant-surgeon's undress of that period (or of every or any period, in the British army)—on the rampart, among a group of young gentlemen from Fort Pitt, mostly of the medical persuasion, but inclusive of the species ensign and lieutenant. We watch the old Commandant as in full fig he paces up and down with Colonel Grimshaw and Major Bagshaw, whose conversation reaches us in fragments as they pass.

"It's a rascally shame to send us to Ireland—that's what I say. There is the Eighty-second, which ought——"

And the Colonel's voice dies away, and no more is heard in articulate speech till at the next wheel and turn the manly note of Bagshaw takes up the tale.

"——, the senior major of the whole batch, with five years more service than Piper! It's a confounded shame—that's what I say; and if I could afford it I'd see the whole service——"

And then comes nothing but "buzz," "buzz," "buzz," 'twixt us and silence; and the medicos, ensigns, and lieutenants think something or other that is going to happen to each is "a confounded shame," and grumble accordingly.

I had been gazetted to the "Queen's Own" Bengal Tigers as assistant-surgeon, and had the day before received orders from my chief at Chatham, to begin my career, to report myself for duty with a detachment proceeding from Tilbury Fort.

My examination had been passed triumphantly. I had borne all jokes, practical and unpractical, which as a "pill" and a "Paddy" I was bound to expect and to undergo. My preliminary training at Sweatenham had not been without its uses at Chatham; and I was established in the good graces of the authorities who deigned to be aware of my existence at all, or to take any interest in my work.

Sir Philip was pleased at the way in which the examiners spoke of me ; and if there had been better news from Lough-na-Carra—if—alas ! that I must say it—if I could, though the thought made my veins thrill and tingle as the blood rushed to my heart—if I could but see Mary Butler once more, and ask her—not to forget me—no, that would not do—forget is too cold a word—well, then—if I could only just see her without troubling myself now to think what I ought to say, I would feel at least satisfied, if not happy, sustained in my purpose of doing my duty, and working on to the end.

Would any one believe me if I told them I did not take a full look more than once at myself in the glass when I was arrayed in my new coatee of blazing scarlet, with its elegant facings of gosling green?—that I never drew my sword, and examined the glittering blade stamped with the renowned name of “ Spriggs and Tacks, army tailors, warranted ” (not to shed blood), and to bend sooner than break or cut?—that I did not practise a few graceful poses and attitudes?—and that I did not grow immensely red as I issued forth in all my splendour to dine with the P.M.O. the first night I became regimental assistant-surgeon of the Bengal Tigers ? I suppose not, and so I shall not make any statement on the subject. All I know is that I was tolerably contented with my position in those days. I had no troubles about relative rank ; I did not care whether Ensign Stock or Lieutenant Trotter was above or below me, or had rank “ with and after ” me in choice of quarters or not. Nor did I burn with a desire to sit as Minos with Æacus Styles and Rhadamanthus Robinson, on Boards, to condemn forage-caps, or pass sentence on a faulty pipeclay contractor. No badge of inferiority in belts or feathers was stamped upon my soul.

Marmaduke Blossom, M.D., Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals, was a gentleman of gracious presence, inclined to be very much *embonpoint*, and with a lofty manner in the ordering of doctors, patients, orderlies, wards, and hospital belongings generally, which marked him as a very Napoleon of medicine. He was, for the time, a highly decorated man ; but these were Præ-Crimean days, and the Russian War, the Chinese War, the Persian War, and the Indian Mutiny, had not produced that crop of ribands, crosses, medals, and clasps which has been sown broadcast over the left breasts of this fortunate generation. He had a mild medal or two for Sikh and Caffre campaigns, but he no more expected a C.B. than he did a Garter. He was given to botany and entomology—had written a monogram on the “ Hocus Gigas ” of South Africa—papers on the “ Pocus Minor of Loodianah ”—on

the "Use of Stimulants in Cases of Weakness and Prostration"—and "Blossom on Bile" was much esteemed by the Indian profession. He had invented a very acute agony for malingerers, in which nitric acid and a powerful galvanic battery had some share; and he was altogether regarded as a highly accomplished officer and a light of the department. Mrs. Blossom was a very thin, acute-figured and sharp-faced little woman, who always spoke in the plural number—unless she consented to a momentary divorce in the form, "the Inspector-General and I;"—and there were many little Blossoms, whose governesses—both parlour and nursery—and nursery-maids, and nurses—were objects of much dread to the youthful medical officers of the garrison, as there were stories abroad of "fellows" being sent off to the West Indies and the Gold Coast, at a moment's notice, for the imputed offence of winking at them.

The P.M.O.'s quarters were the scene of the festivity to which I was bidden.

As in duty bound I was early, and was overwhelmed by the condescension of Mrs. Blossom and the dignity of her great chief, whom I was in the habit of following clinically from ward to ward far more frequently than was good for his reputation in my eyes. There were three medicine men of low degree, who had, like myself, come *au pied de la lettre* of our invitations. They were severally engaged in securing the young affections of four little Blossoms, the extra one of whom was a great embarrassment to McTavish, Byles, and O'Shea respectively. A sad *fraülein*, on a remote chair, superintended the blandishments of the diplomatic doctors and the manners of her youthful charges. My arrival relieved them all immensely. Miss May, a straight-haired, wiry child, was at once attached to me, but I was liberated by the appearance of the Barrack-Master, who was the possessor of an orchard, and had the best claim to the young affections of my little friend. Colonels, majors, and captains, and surgeons, with or without wives and daughters, arrived, one after the other, till the glory culminated in the apparition of the Port-Admiral and of General Sir Thomas and Lady Tickell. It was a great relief to find myself near the end of the table, far removed from the blaze of the great.

"I wouldn't advise you to venture on that fizz," said my neighbour. "The fizz at Chatham is like Vauban's masterpieces—not meant to be taken."

My neighbour was a young engineer just entering on a brilliant career of drainage and culvert-making, and barrack reports all over the world.

"You are going to join the Bengal Tigers, I hear, to-morrow."

"Yes ; I was in orders to-night. Do you know them ?"

"Not very well. Desmond, the man who commands the detachment at Tilbury, is a swell, you know. He exchanged from the Coldstreams, where he got his lieutenancy early—a nephew of Sir Richard Desmond. The famine has stopped the rents, you know, and he has had to leave, I suspect, for more reasons than one."

I knew Sir Richard's third brother, who had always lived abroad, had a son in the army ; but there were no friendly relations between the uncle and the young man, and he never appeared at the Castle. Here he was coming to the surface at last—close at hand too.

Next morning I was on my way to Tilbury, and was duly presented by the medical officer in charge to my combatant chief, Captain Desmond.

He was a handsome young fellow, with a great air of his uncle about him : the same easy, indolent manner, relieved by a quick, observant look ; and at times there was a curl about the lip, and a sneering coldness in his voice, which, far more than his natural disposition, had gained for him the sobriquet of "the Cynic."

"And so you are the son of that Jack Brady of whom I heard so much when I was a youngster. There was something about my aunt Mary—eh ? And that old scamp of an uncle of mine is your guardian ! 'Pon my word, I hope he had not much to do with your teaching."

He listened indolently, looking at me with half-closed eyes as I told him how very little his uncle had to say to me.

"Well, it's small matter to me. When he goes—and they tell me he can't last long—my uncle Denis will take his place ; and we will see what he can do with all that his excellent brother has left of Kilmoyle. By the bye, Mr. Brady, you know my fair cousin Mary Butler ? She made a little sensation last year in London for the short time she was allowed to delight the world. I was not so fortunate as to see her then, for I was on leave ; but I think she promised to be good-looking, but rather heavy in hand, and stupid."

"Stupid, Captain Desmond ? She must be changed indeed. I have not met her for some time now ; but I feel sure she never could be stupid. Even as a young girl she was sensible and clever."

"Ah, you see, sensible women are apt to become stupid as they grow old. And clever girls become such deuced bores. However, I dare say I shall be able some day to judge for myself. I'm very

glad to have a Kilmoyle man in the regiment. Good morning. We shall meet at mess."

I wandered about the barrack-yard, admiring the energy of the British washerwomen, listening involuntarily to the fervid discourse of the matrons of the tub among themselves, or to the short and very imperative admonitions which they addressed to their young broods as they played in the vicinity.

"Guard turn out!" Out tumbled the occupants of the gatehouse and fell into line, and there came in sight in the gateway a portly naval officer in uniform—cocked hat, epaulettes and all. Could it be? No other man in all the land could ever smile like that, or look around him with such large staring, genial eyes. It was Jack Window.

He stopped for a moment, put up his hand to his forehead, as if to clear his view, and in an instant we were shaking hands—two apiece—with a vehemence which much perturbed Sergeant M'Cracken and the guard, and caused a sensation in the barrack-yard among the idlers. In another moment the old fort-wall shook as the first gun of the *Termagant* opened with a salute. The General of the district and the Port-Admiral from Chatham had both arrived on a tour of inspection, and Captain Window was under orders to anchor in the stream alongside the transports which had arrived with a wing of "my regiment."

"We hear there's mischief stirring in that terrible country of yours, Terry," said Captain Jack. "By Jove, I think the fellow was right who said that the only thing to do was to scuttle the whole island."

"Whoever lives in Ireland will be Irish, when it comes up from the bottom. If you peopled the land with English and Scotch, history tell you that they would be less easy to deal with than the natives. Better try to stop the leaks."

"Hang your history, Terry. Don't let us talk politics. I only mean there's always a row going on there."

"Did you ever see the ocean calm when the wind was blowing? And yet no one can see the wind, though he can feel it."

"I would to heaven we could get a calm for once over there," quoth Captain Jack. "I say—drop politics."

I told him all that had passed since we parted, and then he jerked out small waifs and strays of his cruising.

"I say, Terry," he broke in suddenly, "lest I forget it, what became of that dark fellow—that mate of yours with the black eyes and handsome face I took a dislike to—Pendergrass, Pendergas, or some such name?"

"He left College—was engaged in the troubles of 1848, and went abroad. I have not heard of him for a year or more; but I'm told he went to America, and that his sister is about to sell the place and join him. She did wonders during the famine."

"Then, by Jove, it was he!" exclaimed Captain Jack, slapping his thigh. "I seldom mistake a face. I ran into Pensacola from Key West—it's a Yankee port in the Gulf, you know, Terry—and the fellow who boarded us—as cheeky a chap as ever I met, one Lieutenant O'Driscoll—had a man with him whom I could have sworn was our friend. And who do you think O'Driscoll was? Hang me if it wasn't our old acquaintance! It was hard to stand, I tell you, when he asked me, in a regular Cape Cod drawl, with a touch of Cork in it—'Cap'en, say, did you ever happen, when you were on the Irish station, to run a little cruise over this side after a Baltimore clipper called the *Sarey Sykes*?' I was nigh choking on the spot."

"Had the other, whom you think was Maurice Prendergast, a mark on his face?"

"Yes—a red scar on the cheek: the very thing which prevented my being quite sure of him."

"And what happened?"

"What could I do but be civil—keep Mr. O'Driscoll at arm's length—and get out of Pensacola as soon as I could."

When he was returning from his interview with the Port-Admiral, Captain Jack had just time to whisper—"Get ready, my lad; service companies and all. The Cove of Cork—we are to be off with the morning's tide."

It is the custom of the service to act in war time with great publicity, but to keep all movements a dead secret in time of peace—*argal*, Grimshaw and Bagshaw, who had had some inkling of the destination, kept it in their bosoms, and no note of preparation was sounded till orders came round, and then there was of course a cry of "shame." Captain Desmond took it philosophically—"It's a bad time of the year to go over, if ever there's a good time. Rivers all dry, of course—too late for hunting, too early for shooting. However, I have a morbid curiosity to see the country; for I belong to it, though little of it belongs to me. As I was born there, I suppose I must plead guilty to the charge of being an Irishman, but I ain't unlucky enough to be a man of genius as well."

Lieutenant Tweedle, who had just engaged an eminent professor to come over every day from Gravesend and give him lessons on the flute, was furious. "Spider" Leyton, the ensign, who had

the day before fallen in love with—"Egad! the ver' loveliest gurl eva' saw in my life!" was in despair. But the first duty of a soldier is to obey—and pretty hard times of it he will find if he does not—and by that time next evening we were leaning our chins on the bulwarks of the *Anna Maria Jones*, or peering through our glasses at the shore, as with the ebb tide and a light breeze we slipped down past Dover Castle and shaped our course for Land's End.

CHAPTER XXVI.

COUNTRY QUARTERS.

THE regimental order-book was going round the little party of officers just before dinner in the dingy mess-room of the barracks in the pugnacious town of Thurles.

"I see Desmond's in orders for a month's leave; he's always getting leave," yawned Wilmot.

"Don't you know his uncle's dead?" said Nash. "I just saw him at Cork, and he was starting for Nice. He told me he expected the other uncle, who is coming home from India, to arrive in England next week."

"Lucky fellow! to find himself a baronet with a fine estate."

"Oh, it's not such a good property after all, I'm told. The late man went through a great deal of money, and it is bad times for the landlords now, if ever there were good ones here."

It was the first intelligence I had of an event long expected, but that night a letter with the Nice postmark upon it, from Mr. Bates, announced to me the loss of a link in the chain which bound me to the past. "Miss Butler bears up wonderfully," wrote my guardian. "There never was such a nurse in the world, and poor Sir Richard may well have thought, as he did in his last wanderings, that an angel hovered around him. Gerald Desmond, who kept aloof from his uncle for years past, when he heard the last news, wrote to say he would come over, but Sir Richard did not appear very anxious to see him, though he did not tell Mary to decline the visit. I am glad to hear he is disposed to be friendly to you. Denis, too, is on his way home, and will discover he is Sir Denis on his arrival.

"He will, I fear, find the estate in a very undesirable condition. Poor Sir Richard, as you are aware, was only too easy with the tenants, but he could not do without money; and if things went

on badly when he was abroad they went worse when he visited Kilmoyle. The rental has been getting smaller, and the mortgages and interests have been growing. Still, all might have gone on with leases falling in and prices rising but for the famine. The Kilmoyle estate and Ballymoyle were heavily assessed for the rates in aid ; and there is no hope of back rent at all, as the tenants are dead or fled. The mortgages mount up to near ten years' purchase of the rental in good times ; and what they come to now is more than I can say, till we get things to rights. Everything will depend on Sir Denis, and if he is as rich as they say, and manages Kilmoyle as well as he did Auripore and those Indian places I have heard tell of but don't remember the names of, he may save a good deal of the property yet. Of course Miss Mary will live with the new baronet, who was always anxious she should come to him. He was dotingly fond of her poor mother, and if he won't be proud of her he must be worse than a Turk."

Farther and farther the hope of my life was drawing from me ; the vision slowly fading away. I put a band of crape on the arm of my regimental jacket in memory of my departed guardian, and trudged about my little hospital day after day with sinking heart. The new man could take no interest in me ; on the contrary, he would regard me with dislike, for I knew he never forgave my father after he heard how he had treated his sister. He was, I was told, a stern, cold, imperious man, and Mr. Bates's letters showed the good gentleman was rather astonished at the contrast he presented to easy-going Sir Richard. "I am glad to tell you Sir Denis approved of all we had done, but he insisted on having the tomb opened and the remains sent over to Kilmoyle. The Carrara marble will rather astonish them, and I think Sir Denis will open his eyes when he sees the parish church. He is very tender and kind to Mary, and already has made great way with her, for he is direct in purpose and very thoughtful, and he just thaws when she comes into the room like a snow-flake in the sun. I think he is rather pleased with his nephew Gerald, and it is arranged he is to get another month's leave, if possible, and they will go over to Ireland together. Master Gerald is evidently struck with his lovely cousin ; who could help it ? She is to be mistress of everything, but there is some young lady whom Sir Denis took home from India to go and live with them, I believe, the daughter of an old friend, though as I am not favoured with confidence I ask no questions. He rather astonished the London attorneys ; they wrote to say ' they supposed he did not intend to reside at Kilmoyle after his long absence in foreign countries, but assured him of their readiness to take charge of the property.' He was down on them

at once. By return he wrote to Fagg and Grubb, giving instructions and memoranda and views which fairly took away their breath. They would 'at once draw up schedules, showing the whole state of the property, accompanied by maps and rent-rolls, and tables of produce and revenue of all kinds, specifying all particulars connected with every tenant or person living on the estate, to be ready by his arrival in Ireland within three weeks from the date of his letter.' He intends, he told them, to reside permanently in Kilmoyle; the shooting-box in the highlands, and the hunting-seat near Leamington are to be sold at once, and only the family residence in Grosvenor Street, from which the present tenants are to be turned out as soon as possible, is to be retained. Forms after the Indian fashion were annexed, to be filled up with detailed statistical tables about prisons, county rates, poor rates, and churches, schools, fisheries, mines, forests, rivers, lakes, pasturage, arable, peat—Protestants, Catholics, Methodists, Quakers, &c. &c. As Fagg wrote to me—'I think Grubb and I will have enough to do for the rest of our natural lives. It's like an abstract of all the blue books, Devon commissions, poor-law returns, and parliamentary papers issued since the Union. I am thinking we will have rather a different time of it with Sir Denis from what we had with Sir Richard. He'll find it's all very well for Hindoos and Indians; but the Irish can't be managed in that way, as he will find out, or I'm mistaken.' Miss Mary desires to be remembered to you, and says she hopes to see you again at the castle when they return, and she has been saying very kind things of you to Sir Denis, who, you know, has a sort of *rancune* against the name. She must see you in your uniform, she says, to ascertain if there is any difference to the feminine eye between the attire of Mars and Æsculapius. Poor Major Turnbull is much cut up about the loss of his old friend, and says he can't bear to go back to the castle—for the present, at any rate; though Sir Denis, who knew him well in India, insists on his staying in the old quarters. As for myself, when I wind up Sir Richard's affairs as far as I can, I will retire from work and amuse myself—sorry fun I fear it will be, Terry—with looking after the affairs of Lough-na-Carra as well as I can from some warm spot abroad, making a run over now and then whenever I am wanted, if indeed I can be of any use to any one."

For one long year I only heard thus of Sir Denis and Mary Butler at intervals. The regiment was broken up in detachments, and at first I was left at Thurles to attend to the sick, of whom, as typhus and whisky were busy in the county, there were only too many. Then I was transferred to Clonmel, and then I was moved

from place to place till I at last found myself in the sweet town of Athlone. There I was within a ride of Kilmoyle and Kilcarra ; and the very day after my arrival I heard that Sir Denis was expected home. The news that the new proprietor was coming to the long-neglected family residence caused a variety of feeling among the people. The tenantry wondered whether he would be as "easy" as his brother, or whether he would be "a tyrant : " the few proprietors who lived on their estates rather disliked the idea of being overshadowed by a man of such reputation and reputed wealth.

The Bengal Tigers had now gathered up one wing in Athlone, as if prepared for a new flight ; and "Major Bagshaw and the officers of her Majesty's own West Lincoln Regiment" (which consisted, by the bye, of some sixty per cent. of Irishmen, who would have been exceedingly puzzled to say where the regiment got its designation) "requested the honour of the company, &c. &c.," of a number of the neighbouring gentry to dinner in order to celebrate the occasion. I confess, till my mess bills came round, I liked these convivial meetings, though our cook was a thorn in the flesh, whose doings were not easily to be eradicated, and our wine was "the best that could be got"—furious as fire in sherries, fiery as lava in clarets, and suggestive of perry, sugar, and white-lead in champagnes—and the glitter of plate had ceased to be a glaze for the burnt soups, under-done fish, indescribable *entrées*, and portentous joints.

"I ovaw I nevaw sit down to dinnaw at awr mess but I feel as if I wa engwaged in positive hostilties : first a despwet skermwish with the swoop," gasped little Crammer, "in which you're sure to be wowsted ; then you move on the fish, which pwesents a dreffle resistance—what's not bone is hawder than bone, and what's soft is softer, egad ! than anything. Then the howid and awtful enemy thwows out deuced lot of small wowwyng fawmations—invincible squaws and columns of unenterable *entrées* at quawtaw distance. Gethwing up all our stwenth, we engwage in a sangwiney en-countaw with an impwegnable joint, and as we retiwaw awfly shattawed are attacked by a relentless and persecuting pastwy, which nevaw leaves a fellow till he's dead on the field. The only comfort is there's no howid band to pwolong our agonies."

Still I enjoyed mess dinners immensely. I was young and strong, and I rejoiced in meeting people in the animation of the social hour.

Among the company this night were outsiders from the distant regions of Kilmoyle, who knew who I was and remembered the poor old granddad—Caseys, Cassidys, and unconnected Bradys.

"What has become of Maurice Prendergast?" I asked of young Casey, of Barnwell.

"They say he's in the United States, but there is almost a certainty he has been over here lately—men who know him well have seen him about Kilmoyle. He would be pardoned if he would ask for it, but he's a most malignant rebel. Rose, poor girl, has made several attempts to sell the old house and the few acres; but no one will buy, and the country people swear the land shan't go till times get better and there's a fair price to be had."

"I say, Cassidy," shouted Lord Belbrook across the table, "you know Sir Denis came last night to Kilmoyle for good at last? The castle has been put to rights, and Miss Butler will rule the roast in the county as far as beauty is concerned. There's a deuced pretty girl with her, though, I've heard. Sir Denis will give no balls—only friendly dinners."

"I wonder does he hunt?" asked Mr. Cassidy.

"Rides like a bird," answered Lord Belbrook. "My nephew Jack says he's a great sportsman. And he'll fight, too, if any one wants it."

"If he'll keep up the old Kilmoyle claret, and be as free with it as his brother, poor Dick, that's enough for me," quoth Mr. Trench; "but I hear they drink nothing but beer in India."

"He will be hard set to hunt anything but bailiffs, or drink any better stuff than cowl'd water, if he has to live on what he gets from the boys, anyway," observed Mr. Peyton.

"Why, Peyton, he's a Nabob! Has no end of rupees and mohurs, and all that sort of thing; in sacks, like potatoes, only they're on camels and elephants instead of asses' backs, I hear," said another.

"He'll discover, I fear, there's more difficulty in getting Kilmoyle into order than there was in annexing Auripore," remarked my neighbour, a dark-visaged officer belonging to a detachment lying alongside us. "That was a great *coup*, and made his name, though it nearly finished him too."

"Do tell us all about the Auripore case, Major Harness, if you please, as you know it," asked Mr. Trench. "I often heard them talking of it lately, and it's awkward meeting a neighbour who has done a great thing if you don't know all particulars."

"I know the story very well, but it's a long one I fear——"

"Oh, let us have it, by all means," exclaimed Lord Belbrook. "I'm not very clear about the pros and cons., though I've heard enough of it in the House, Lord knows!"

We sat over our wine, as the Major went on with his story, which he told in a sententious, solemn sort of way. At the close

I was breathless—a secret awe crept over me—again there came out of the gloom a dreadful apprehension, an alarm which chilled my blood, indefinite but not the less terrible.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RANEE OF AURIPORE.

THE Rajah of Auripore, began Major Harness, was the last of his race—the last of a race which was old when William and Harold were swearing friendship to each other in Normandy, and which was known in India when Alexander was leading his iron men of war from that land towards the home he never was to see. The Rajah was a weak man, fond of pleasure, of poetry, music, perfumes, flowers, nautches—almost as abandoned, in fact, to the delights of sense as if he was an old Roman or a modern Boyard. It would not be correct, perhaps, to say that any nobleman in our own times was ever so reckless or extravagant, that any one had ever so greatly wasted his substance, and neglected the people entrusted to his charge, as the Rajah of Auripore. But if there were such a one, at all events, it was fortunate for him that no Mr. Desmond was at hand to sit on his delinquencies as judge and executioner—to determine and punish at one and the same time. Well, gentlemen, anyway, when the young Rajah was summoned from the Zenanah to the throne, disturbances arose in the kingdom. Turbulent nobles levying war against the Rajah, or against each other, created disorders and committed excesses which we all agreed jeopardized the peace of the adjacent British territory.

This Auripore was a wealthy State, and had long attracted the attention of the Honourable Company.

An officer was despatched to Auripore to warn the Rajah that such a spectacle of lawlessness was afflicting to the sense of the Company. The sound of one of his rival's guns had driven the Rajah from his hunting-seat to the protection of the walls of the town. The Rajah asked what he could do. There were those who told him that his enemy had been secretly encouraged by promises of help, if not by the actual assistance of men and money, by the Power which now proffered him safety if he would sign a treaty. A treaty was signed ; an imposing force of British soldiers and Sepoys marched across the frontier and swept through the land with fire and sword. The Resident appointed to Auripore

was Mr. Desmond, and the land soon felt the vigour of his sway. But still there were intrigues within the palace and tumults without. The revenues could not be collected, the turbulent landowners declared that they would not pay tribute. The subsidy fell into arrears; each year added to the total of the debt. The Rajah sought to shut out the admonitions of the Resident by secluding himself in his Zenanah, but you may guess in vain.

"It is my duty to inform your Highness," wrote Mr. Desmond, "that if the grave offences which have been perpetrated against good faith, and if the neglect of your Highness's obligations be continued, no alternative will be left to my Government but to insist on the stipulations of the treaty which your Highness so solemnly formed with us."

The proclamations announcing the suspension of the Rajah's rule were prepared—the measures for taking possession concerted—the land was already mapped out for the purposes of the new Government. A corps of infantry, cavalry, and artillery assembled on the frontier to put down resistance. Suddenly the force was ordered to withdraw. A long convoy laden with gold and silver was escorted from the Residence to the Company's Treasury in Agra. The Rajah dismissed his ministry, his musicians, his nautch-girls; reduced his hordes of retainers one-half. Some of his father's most able servants, hitherto neglected, were despatched to the most unruly districts to displace his own favourites. Desmond, with whom I was at the time, smiled when he heard the news.

"And who do they say, Moulvie, is at the bottom of all this?" he said to our informant. "Will it last?"

"I hear, my lord, it is a woman. If so, her rule will only endure as long as does the bloom of the flower."

But it lasted longer than we thought, and Desmond felt that a blow had been given to his reputation at Calcutta and in Leadenhall Street. And soon as he received a "secret and confidential" despatch, in which the Court said, "The measures supposed to be necessary for the due enforcement of the treaty stipulations with his Highness the Rajah of Auripore, had caused an expenditure of no less than rupees 270,000 6 annas. The Council could not but express their regret that an error, approaching to precipitancy, had led to such a heavy and, it is thought, unwarrantable outlay."

Desmond held his peace and Auripore continued to struggle on, and to keep wriggling away from annexation, like a wounded bird from a boa. It was rumoured, after a time, that the Rajah was about to elevate one of his favourites to the throne. "Who was she?" we asked.

"A wonder of the world—a goddess of women ; fair as the snows on Dewanghiri ; her hair is golden, her eyes are blue, and her skin is white as alabaster."

In due time it was next announced that a child had been born to his Highness. Then shortly after we were told the Rajah was sick, and soon after he died.

At daybreak next morning the people saw proclamations on the walls. They were short and stern—"The Rajah of Auripore having died without legitimate issue, or representative, or successor, the administration of his dominions has devolved, by virtue of treaty, on the Hon. East India Company."

The flames of the Rajah's funeral pyre were still reddening the sky, as Mr. Desmond issued from his Compound and proceeded towards the palace, surrounded by his staff and escort. I was there at the time with the only party of regulars on the spot. The townspeople were alarmed by the tramp of men, and, hastening to the gates, they saw through the gloaming the glare of the matches of the artillery and the sheen of the bayonets. Fraser, who commanded the Auripore Contingent, drew the men up in front of the main entrance of the palace ; the cavalry of the Contingent were on the flanks, covering the artillery. Inside the building—more like a small suburb than a palace—all was confusion : the natives in turmoil, like a nest of ants.

"And what of the Ranee ? What of his Highness's child ?" asked an aged vakeel, who had been permitted to bear a writing from the palace to the Resident, which he had read in silence.

His Excellency looked at the envoy, whiffed his cheroot, puffed out a mouthful of smoke, and said—"There is no Ranee, and you know it. There is no child of the Rajah's living—and you know it."

The vakeel tried to speak—could not—bowed and retired.

"Now, Fraser," said his Excellency, "proceed to execute your orders."

Mr. Desmond rode into the court-yard, which was filled by the terrified followers of the Rajah.

He gave the rein to his syce, and mounted the steps which led to the piazza in which the Rajah had held his court. He sat down on the Rajah's throne. Musicians, nautch-girls, and hordes of the royal family of Auripore were brought before him ; but as each came in terror to his feet, he waved his hand and simply said, "Go !"

His eye was turned towards the grand staircase. Fraser came with long strides down the hall.

"The Ranee is in the Zenanah, sir, and refuses to come. I fear to force the doors, for the men are hardly to be depended on. They are sulky already."

"Go back, Fraser, to the Ranee, as you call her. Say that if she can prove she is the late Rajah's wife, or that her child is his child, all that has been done must be then undone. If she does not come out, I will order Lieutenant Harness to force the doors."

Fraser was about to speak, but a look caused him to depart without opening his lips. In a few minutes he returned, followed by his men. They were guarding a palkee, screened with curtains of golden tissue. The body of the litter was richly gilt and encrusted with precious stones, and from the summit a plume of peacocks' feathers rose out of a cone-shaped socket, glittering with rough emeralds and pearls. It was borne by four natives in the livery of the late Rajah, and by the side walked a group of veiled women, whose bangles clanked audibly at every step, so great was the silence. An aged man, clad in green and silver robes, with a staff of office in his hand, followed the litter. When the litter-bearers came before the throne on which the Resident sat they laid it down, bowed to the ground, and retired.

"The Ranee has come, your Excellency," said Fraser. "Her Highness is in the litter with her child."

"Let the woman who calls herself the Ranee of Auripore appear, with her child," replied the Resident, speaking in Hindoostanee.

There was a pause for a moment—a rustling, as if of some soft garment inside the curtains of the litter, and then a voice, sweet, full, and strong, rang through the hall.

"The Ranee of Auripore hears the Sahib Resident's words! She knows he cannot mean to outrage a woman and a Queen; he will not call on her to unveil her face before the people. In the name of all that is sacred, she protests against his acts! She appeals to his masters, sure that they will repair the wrong done to one of their most faithful friends and allies!"

"It is by the orders of my masters, the Company, that I claim their rightful territory. I tell you, woman, you are not the Ranee of Auripore, nor is the child you have within there the child of the Rajah."

There was another pause, and the voice spoke again—

"The proofs of what I say, oh, Resident! are clear as day. Let the Resident look and see!"

The old man took a roll of papers and was advancing to the throne, when he was arrested by the words of the Resident—

"It is vain! I know the papers that have been written and

the witnesses who have been suborned. But I have proof—proof positive, do you hear, woman?—that the Rajah for two long years has been as one that is dead, without sense or reason, and that he could not contract a marriage. As to the child, the proof that it is not his is in your palkee and in your arms. Produce the child, and all the world will see the truth!”

The Resident leaned slightly forward and waited. A suppressed cry came from within the curtains—then, after a while, the wail of an infant stole forth, as if it had been awakened from its sleep, and the voice said—

“Take thou the child and judge!”

At the sound of her name one of the maids stepped to the litter, put in her arms, and withdrew them with an infant, slightly clad in a little muslin robe, which permitted its brown legs and arms to be seen.

The Resident examined the little thing as it lay struggling in its nurse’s arms, terrified at the strange faces around it; a smile played round his mouth—

“It is well done!—very well done. Now let us see the mother.”

As he spoke, springing from the musnud he rushed to the palkee, tore open the curtains, and turning to the crowd, exclaimed scornfully—

“See the woman who is mother of the Rajah’s child!”

Striving in vain to draw back the curtain with one hand, while with the other she sought to clutch her veil and cover her face and bosom, was a woman of singular beauty. She seemed to us all a European. Her golden hair fell in masses over her shoulders, her cheeks flushed anger and shame, and her eyes, burning with rage, gave light and animation to her features. Her arms, covered with bracelets—her neck, heavy with strings of emeralds and diamonds—were rounded and fair; and as she seized the curtain in her right hand there was something of the wounded tigress in her passionate efforts and cries—

“Shame, coward! to do me this wrong,” she exclaimed. “Is there no man among you all to strike him to the earth? Oh! that a look could blast you where you stand!”

The curtain was drawn, and a cry of despair, followed by sobs, burst from the Ranee.

Turning to the woman who held the wailing child, the Resident said—

“Take back the infant to her who owns it. Do you, who are her people, remove that woman hence. Let her go as she pleases with her ill-gotten gold, but I cannot permit her to deceive you.

Know you this, all ye people who hear me. Three years ago, the woman who calls herself Ranee of Auripore came to the Rajah's Zenanah. From the date of her arrival she, by her spells, as you would say, bewitched the Rajah. When she had, by pandering to his miserable debaucheries, destroyed his intellect and ruined his body, she began the plot which I this day have brought to nought."

The "Auripore Case" furnished themes in the Upper House to Lord Slapperton, to Mr. Straddles, Q.C., in the Lower House, and to the lawyers for a long time, as you all know. Mr. Desmond was denounced in parodies of Burke's and Sheridan's speeches against Warren Hastings. The Honourable Company was assailed with declamations, which it thought of considerably less weight than rupees. The end of it all was, that Auripore was finally annexed, and Desmond ruled bravely and wisely in the palace of the Rajah, or rather, in a very snug Residence of much greater comfort outside it. He ruled prosperously, too; he crushed rebellion; he made war, and he conquered; he annexed more States; he had rivals and enemies, but he sat solid and fixed in his place of power as one of the deities of the people, and they trembled at his name.

And now comes another part of my story, and a singular affair it was. It was one night in June—a night which had followed a day of intense heat. The wind blew in sighs—hot and choking as though they were blasts blurted forth from a furnace. The Resident's bedroom opened on a verandah, a sentry paced to and fro in the garden below; and the punkahwallah, pulling his rope with machine-like regularity, sat close to the window. The Resident suddenly awoke—God knows why. It was just in time. At his bedside stood a figure, draped in black, with upraised hand. Ere he could speak, a flash dazzled his eyes from a pistol so close to his head that the flame burnt his brow; but strong, prompt, and fearless, the Resident was on his legs in a moment, and grappling the assassin, tore from his hand a dagger. In another instant he was struck to the ground by a heavy blow, but the report had aroused the Residency and the wretches fled. Instant search, headed by the Resident himself, was made, but it was to no effect.

Footsteps as of two persons—one with very small feet—were traced in the garden, but they were lost in the grass of the Compound. A violent storm baffled the pursuit, and we returned without any clue to the would-be murderers.

"It is very strange, you know, Fraser," said the Resident, as we were assembled in his room; "but I could almost swear it

was a woman I was struggling with when I was knocked down. The punkahwallah and the Sepoy may be in it. However, let the matter rest now. It was a near thing for me. By the bye, let us see the dagger I took in the contest."

It lay on the table—a sharp stiletto-like blade, with walrus-tooth handle, inlaid with gold. Fraser took up the weapon, and we all examined it curiously.

"It is a Kashmir dagger," said he. "Excellency, you had indeed a lucky escape. See! there is a groove full of poison, fresh and green; a scratch would probably have killed you."

"My life is in the hands of God, Fraser, as are all our lives; and if He willed me now to die by the dagger of an assassin, I could say, His will be done!"

It may be imagined there was a pretty stir made through the whole district, although the Resident was not at all concerned about it. There was a strict inquiry carried on by order of Government. Every one near the place was examined, but no light was thrown on the transaction.

Lall Bukh, punkahwallah, deposed "that he was working away at his rope, and listening to the distant thunder, when he heard a shot in the Resident's room, and cries for help. He saw something like a bear struggling with the Resident, and in another moment, as he was running to aid him, a thing like a tiger, with wings and fiery eyes, sprang out, nearly killed him, and vanished through the garden. He could say no more."

Sheik Munnoo, Sepoy, deposed "that he was on duty below the verandah, when suddenly he heard a shot and loud cries inside. He was running to the spot, when several figures leaped out into the garden, at one of which he fired, and to another gave a bayonet thrust, both without effect. He pursued, but lost sight of them all in the dark among the buildings of the Compound.

No one else knew anything whatever concerning the murderous attempt, and it remained an utter mystery who were concerned in it or how they managed to get inside the Residency, which was surrounded by lofty walls and was guarded by sentries within hail of each other; but of course there were suspicions that the Ranee had something to say to the affair, as she had sworn to have her revenge on Desmond. The strangest reports flew through the Bazaars. It was said that Fraser, whom I have mentioned, an officer of the Company's service, who had been in command of the late Rajah's contingent, and who was actually in charge of the native troops in the city at the time, had been for some period before the Rajah's death in intimate relations with this woman and knew all about her; indeed there were people who believed

she was sheltered by his servants with his knowledge long after the annexation. Anyway, the friendship which had subsisted between him and Desmond cooled, and at last Fraser was removed to another district, but there, as elsewhere, he got into difficulties about money. Ere his wife died there had been already a great scandal about some native lady which caused much unhappiness in his home, and the Bazaars had it that it was this lady who afterwards became Ranee of Auriapore, while others were of opinion, as Mr. Desmond I know was, that the Ranee was really a European adventuress, though we never could get at the truth.

Desmond, in fact, never wished to sift the matter to the bottom, but it was remarked that when Fraser, who had powerful interest which got him over endless scrapes, was sent off to the North West, he relaxed many precautions which had been instituted after the midnight outrage. No open rupture ever took place between them indeed, and to the last Mr. Desmond took the greatest interest in Fraser's little daughter, who was a beautiful child—wonderfully so indeed considering that her mother was very plain. To add to the interest created by her great beauty, there was a report going that Mrs. Fraser never could bear the child, and had become subject to a strange hallucination that it was not her own, but that it had been changed at nurse: and in that belief the poor woman died.

"And where is this Fraser now?" inquired Lord Belbrook.

"He's yet in the Company's service, and had the raising of a regiment of irregulars which did good service in the last war and now goes by his name, but he is a sad fellow for getting into trouble. Don't you remember an affair in Dublin—a Colonel Fraser who was beaten coming out of Morris's gambling house? That was the very man. He has gone back to India, I hear, in a desperate state, and my sister, who knew poor Mrs. Fraser well, writes me word that the young lady has been taken by Sir Denis to live with him till better times have turned up, though he has no great liking for the father."

"And this woman was never discovered, you say? Could not the Government find out all about her in such a country as India, where money goes a long way? God bless me, Mr. Brady! you look ill! What is the matter?"

Muttering some excuse about the heat of the room, I rose from the table, apologized to the president of the mess for a little giddiness and temporary indisposition, and almost tottered rather than walked out into the corridor.

"Poor fellow!" whispered Mr. Casey to the Major as I left. "He lost his father in India, and his mother was drowned coming

home with him from Calcutta. I suppose he can't bear to hear people talk of the place ; no wonder."

The night air cooled my heated cheeks, but I felt as though my blood had turned to molten lead. Go where I might this woman, was rising up by night and by day. This woman your mother ! Have you a drop in your veins, Terence Brady, of such a nature as that ? Better to die at once than live to walk the earth and to become some day the true son of such as her child must be. Where, oh where was this misery to end ? Every year was revealing some new cause of fear and dislike. Hate, or a dread so wild that it was allied to hate, was taking the place of the tenderness and the boundless love which had once filled my very soul for her. What touches remained to be added to the picture which had driven forth the memories of the dream of my boyhood's devotion and idolatry ?

I sought in vain to shut out the thoughts that would come unbidden. As the Major's story went on I listened to him with a sickening apprehension ; one word was more dreadful than the other. What to those around me was merely a curious little story about a man in whom they felt some languid curiosity, was to me a frightful revelation—a slough of despair. Tears did not relieve me, though God knows they came welling from my hot eyes like lava.

The conviction had grown on my mind that the woman associated with Fraser was the same as she who had blighted my father's prospects, ruined his career, embittered the last years of my grandfather's life, who had suddenly seized on a dreadful calamity with such dexterity and feline swiftness to turn it to her advantage in the scheme she was meditating to desert her child for her unholy passion or caprice, and who now was standing at the secret tribunal within my breast, accused by her son of dreadful crimes. For with a revulsion of feeling which had been coming on slowly and laboriously, bearing against the strong barriers of my natural affection, till they burst beneath accumulating pressure, I arrived at the conclusion that the false Raneé of Auripore—the woman who had ruined this wretched Rajah and quickened his death—the woman who had placed the pistol to the head of the sleeping Resident—the evil genius of my existence—was no other than the glittering heartless girl who had fascinated my father, who had maddened her husband, had abandoned her child, and had of her own free will finally sought a career in the vile intrigues of the Zenanah, without a future or a friend. You will see hereafter how far my conclusions were justified.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WELCOME TO KILMOYLE.

IT was on a fine May day, more than a year after our arrival in Ireland, that the roll of our drums, coming nearer and nearer, roused the town of Kilmoyle to more than normal activity.

"The army is coming! Here are the soldiers, Kitty, darlin'! Run, boys! Hurry up, alannah!"

The whole population, deserting business, such as it was, flocked towards the bridge to gaze on a sight which, possessing attractions for most folk, is perfectly irresistible to an Irish crowd. It was market-day. Streams of the peasantry flowed in contending currents through the main street, which long drawn out ended promiscuously in a grand flourish of mud-hovels, striving with might and main to render themselves distinguishable from the wide expanse of bog, over which they peered with an ostentatious pretence of roof and doorway. Above the hum of many voices in sale and bargain, and the strains of ballad-singers, rose the tumult of pigs, the clangour of geese, and the lowing of cattle, mingled with the shrill adjurations of professional beggars, and the cries for charity of cripples and "objects" of all kinds, who seem to spring out of the ground on such occasions in the Green Isle. Peasants' carts, laden with flour, butter, and mounds of women and children, formed little islands in the thoroughfare, or drawn up in files by the rugged border of stone which did duty as a *pavé*, compressed the crowd in the narrow street. The ford of the river below the bridge was thronged by peasant girls, preparing for the ordeal of shoes and stockings, in which they were going to enter the town in due form, stumping over the old humpbacked arches which had felt the tramp of St. Ruth's Frenchmen and the march of De Ginkel's veteran Dutch. The men, taking off their swallow-tailed coats, hung them over their shoulders, across the universal blackthorn, from which the garments floated like pennons significant of battle. The general effect of the scene produced an impression that a nomad race on their pilgrimage to an unknown land were passing through the town. Indeed, most of them could have moved off as they stood, walked to the ends of the earth, and left nothing behind them. In the space formed by the Market House on one side, the Court House and a line of small shops on the other, were the booths and stalls of itinerant dealers in cakes, calico, coloured wood engra-

vings of the worst possible style, haberdashery, clothing, and cheap finery—the precipitate out of the troubled waters of petty commerce all over the world which settles down in Ireland. The sun, flashing from the mica and window-panes, shone on a proud pile of granite—a castle-like edifice enclosed by a high wall. It was indeed the Castle of Indolence, within which, pent up in discontent and sloth, some hundreds of paupers, out of many miserable thousands equally needy outside, sought refuge from want and death. On the bank of the river lower down, surrounded by a still higher wall, towered aloft in its solid magnificence the County Gaol. Nearer the bridge, a substantial white-washed house, protected by walls of masonry, faced the high road, offering a strong contrast in its regular outlines and comfortable appearance to the cabins which formed a squalid suburb. It was the Police Barrack. Just over the belt of trees which marked the course of the Carra, through the rich meadows, were visible the chimneys of Kilmoyle Castle. Two or three mansions of less pretensions, each nestled in its own wood, dotted the rolling hills, which circled the flat moor speckled with dark mounds of peat. My pulse quickened as I made out the grove that hid Lough-na-Carra from my eager eyes. Down the road, half hidden in the dust which arose beneath their tread, appeared our column of infantry, preceded by the mounted officers, of which I, Terence Brady, was one, and by the drummers and fifers who were drumming and fifeing away their loudest and shrillest in the quick march of “The Royal Bengal Tigers.” The bayonets glistening in the sun, the life and motion of the scarlet line as it twined along the road in and out of the light grey cloud which ascended from the beat of many feet, the flashing of accoutrements, were delightful to the beholders, but afforded no pleasure to us thirsty warriors who, hot and fagged, had left Athlone in the early morning. It was not agreeable to be bandied about as we had been lately, to aid the constabulary in keeping the peace, as if that could be kept which was always broken. The old soldiers from India, and the young soldiers who had not long left the depôt of the regiment, were in no very genial mood as they strode over the bridge, although the beauty and fashion of Kilmoyle, and all the townsfolk and county visitors, had flocked there to gaze upon them.

“It’s worse than Fuzzypore that was all mud, mosques, and monkeys!” said one.

“Well! I thought it was hard to beat our last billet, at Ballynapogue,” grumbled another; “but I’d give a pint to get back there this minit.”

"Murphy, show us your dad's mansion and grounds, will you?"

"There it is, Jack, just beyond the church there in the wood; but Sir Dinis is keeping us out of it."

"I've only seen one decent-looking girl in the whole pack of them—such a lot of thick-shanked ugly devils I haven't laid eyes on since we left the Hottentot Venuses."

As the drums and fifes marched on, the listeners kept pace with them to the gates of the half-ruined barrack, which had been prepared for the reception of the novel visitors; Kilmoyle had gone out of date as a military station ever since the time of '98, when it was the head-quarters of the Kilmoyle Yeomanry, whose standing toast on their "dinner nights" was—"Here's to the Kilmoyle Light Horse—the Terror of Bonaparte!" The band rolled and squeaked its last ruffle and strain, Major Bagshaw, reining in his horse, gave orders to keep out the crowd, which would fain have followed the head of the column into the enclosure, and became unpopular on the spot. The companies wheeled into the line along the parade-ground—the Major and I dismounted, and the men stood eyes front, as Bagshaw walked down the line with the air of a man who has a solemn duty to perform in finding fault with something or other, and yet is rather puzzled to execute it. Not that the Major was a querulous or ill-conditioned person. He was one of those meritorious officers who cannot believe they are doing their duty unless they are making their authority felt some way or another among their men, simply because they think they understand the Queen's Regulations, and do not understand human nature. If duty was to be performed at all, it could only be done, he thought, in consequence of a direct order for each particular act; and it was almost disobedience in his eyes for a man to pretend to do anything unless he were told to do it, as it certainly was the sum of human wickedness to do more or less than the exact thing ordered.

"Captain Savage," quoth the Major, "there was a great deal too much talking in the company as it came into the town."

Captain Savage was a centurion who had risen from the ranks, and had borne all the evils of his unhappy elevation with much fortitude, living ever in the hope that if any one must die in the regiment, it might be a Major for choice; not that he disliked majors in the abstract, but that he desired to be a major in the concrete, to sell, and retire, with or without Mrs. Savage, to a small Channel Island. He stood at attention, as if he were a ranker once more, murmured some mild acknowledgment of the rebuke into his stock, and scowled at his sergeant, who looked in

his turn fiercely along the line with an eye which shot its arrows right into the rear rank. The subalterns, Wilmot and Nash, exchanged a glance from flank to flank, which, in plain rendering, meant—"Don't you think it's rather fun for old Bagshaw to drop on old Savage?" They agreed it was with the same look. The Major passed on, and had just reached the second man of the next company, when he started perceptibly, drew himself up stiffly, and then, pointing with his finger in a menacing manner to a private, exclaimed, in solemn and awe-inspiring tones—"Captain Desmond, what is the matter with that man?"

The officer thus addressed arched his brows with a look of curiosity, and examined the object suggested by the Major's digit with profound attention. The "object" was a thin, muscular, sunburnt swarthy soldier, with coarse black hair and stubbly whiskers. Standing bolt upright, with every finger and thumb in its proper place, his toes, knees, hands, and arms all according to regulation, and staring right before him at the Major's finger, the unhappy private presented an appearance of soldierly exactness and regulation rigidity with which it was hard to find fault.

"The man? That man, Major Bagshaw!" said Captain Desmond, after a leisurely survey. "I see nothing wrong about him."

"Nothing wrong, sir! Good Heavens!" exclaimed the Major, in a voice of expostulation, half broken with emotion. "Do, *pray*, Captain Desmond, look at that!"

Taking a step nearer to the culprit, with outstretched arm he put his forefinger, in front of the neck, on the junction of the collar of the coatee, which had become unhooked, and through the narrow rift in which an accustomed eye might observe that the stiff black stock had somewhat relaxed in its grasp of the wind-pipe, and from imperfect buckling stood out so as to leave a section of brawny, brown throat visible. Then turning slowly round, with a look which plainly expressed his opinion of the offence, the Major repeated, with much gravity—"Pray look at that, Captain Desmond—look at that!"

"Yes, sir, I see. The man had sun-stroke in India, and, I suppose, eased off his stock; but when I inspected the company this morning he was all right. It shall be seen to."

The Major waved his hand and passed on; but so happy was he in having detected the criminal neglect, that he condoned several irregularities of greater consequence in the rest of his inspection. After a while, the imposing ceremony was over, the dismiss was called, and the men proceeded to their new quarters. Although

damages had been rigidly exacted from the last tenants, and every nail-hole duly counted and paid for, the apartments assigned to the field-officer, his captains and subalterns, were by no means of a magnificent character or even strictly comfortable. Bare walls, stained doors, carpetless floors, and rusty grates—all had a look of desolation which only an Arab of the desert, or a British officer, can understand. Whilst we were engaged in mapping out chambers, and fixing the sites for bedstead, portable chair, portmanteau, and favourite portrait, the rumble of a carriage summoned many heads to the windows. The soldiers in the room above me, already in shirt-sleeves and forage-caps, with pipes in their mouths, were staring at the vehicle, which drew up outside my window.

"Isn't she an elegant girl,—the tall one with the dark hair, I mean?"

"Hush, boys! maybe they'd hear us. That's Sir Denis that's with them, I'm sure—the captain's uncle—him whose house I showed you through the trees nigh hand the church; and that's his niece, Miss Butler—the other one I niver seen afore."

"Faith, and she's not bad either! What fine fair hair she has, and she's full of fun. Oh! faith, they're looking! Draw back!—there's the captain!"

My heart was beating a double tattoo. What was I doing? Rushing out to greet the welcome visitors? No! Look out of the window? No. Peeping, at all events, at my old friend? No, I dared not look; I could not peep. The fact was, I was in a false—a particularly false position. My room was on the ground floor, and was nearly level with the parade. There was no blind to the window; and, although a person outside could not see right down to the floor, a few feet more elevation gave a complete command of the apartment except at a small angle beside the window, close to the wall. As ill luck would have it, I had ordered "a tub," and I was enjoying the refreshing splashes of the Carra water, after my hot and dusty ride, in the bath-corner, where my servant had laid down a piece of oilcloth, when I was surprised by the roll of the carriage-wheels. Ere I could dart across the room to the side where my clothes were piled up on a chair near the door, to my horror, two bonnets rose high above the window-sill—the Castle coachman towered aloft—the great carriage-horses could almost have laid their noses on me, had they put in their necks through the open window! As long as I kept recumbent in my tub in the corner, I was safe, but if I moved I was in full view of the occupants of the carriage. It was a very unpleasant—a very ridiculous—position; but, although many ideas flashed through my brain, such as throwing a wet towel at the

coachman, and splashing water in the horses' faces, I dared not execute any of them, and to this moment, I have never decided on the proper course under all the circumstances. I could see Sir Denis's hat, and the feathers and ribands in the bonnets made me cringe again as they nodded and fluttered close to the window. The voices sounded in my very ear. I was aware that Captain Desmond had come to the carriage.

"When you have quite satisfied Mary that you have the stronger hand of the two," breaks out Sir Denis, "perhaps you will be good enough to let me welcome you!"

"My dear uncle! You, a *preux chevalier*, can never find fault with me for paying my duty to my fair cousin!"

(Gerald Desmond was rather a prig.)

They shook hands. I could see their heads wagging. Captain Desmond's voice again—"And you too, uncle—'pon my honour, you are younger than ever."

"Well, I can't wonder at your thinking so if you see my looks reflected in the face you are looking at," said Sir Denis. "Mary, my dear! you have quite forgotten to present your cousin Gerald to your friend and mine."

"Captain Desmond is so nervous, uncle; I was waiting for him to recover himself," replied Mary. "Cousin, let me introduce you to Miss Mabel Fraser, whom we of her familiars are allowed to call Mab! That is a long way off for you yet."

Captain Desmond, I am sure, made a bow, and said—"I am charmed to be allowed to speak to Miss Fraser at all!"

"And now, Gerald, I want to know the commanding officer, and the girls of course would like to see all the young fellows. You must come over to dinner to-night, and you, Gerald, will stop at the Castle afterwards if you can. We'll try and get up a dance as soon as possible; but there's scarce a soul left in the county, as the boys have been making themselves very agreeable to resident landlords lately. What kind of a man is your major, and how do you like being *numeroté* in the line?"

"Well, uncle, they're not a bad set of fellows, take them all in all. Bagshaw, the major, is a pompous old muff, but a good soldier; Savage, the senior captain here—mind this, Cousin Mary, and no trifling with young affections—is nearer fifty than forty. Mrs. Savage and two columns of her infantry are moving with the baggage train. Harcourt, a son of the Brandy Harcourt you knew in former days in India, is a capital fellow. So is Potts. As to the subs., they are like all subs.—some are merry and wise, and some are wise and not merry, and some neither. They are black, brown, and white—tall and short, fat and lean! They'll all be

trotted out at the Castle for the inspection of Cousin Mary, Miss Fraser, and the ladies of Leitrim, and you can judge for yourselves."

"And where's Terence? Where is my old friend and playmate, Terence Brady?" asked that angel voice. (Oh! Terry, Terry! don't splash the water!) "I so long to see him back among us all again!" (God bless you, Mary dear, for the words!) "It's strange he has not been out to see us." (How could I? Who can come out if you won't let a man get at his clothes?) "I fully expected he would have been the first to welcome us."

"Oh! Brady? the Doctor? Yes, to be sure! I can't imagine why he hasn't made his bow, as he has nothing to do. I forgot, for a moment, you and he were old friends; but, though I'm bound to hunt out old Bagshaw for you, the Doctor must really be responsible for himself. Excuse me for a moment; I'm off to find the Major."

"Stay, Gerald," said his uncle; "I will go with you. The girls won't mind staying in the carriage for a moment—particularly as they are surrounded by gallant admirers aloft there," he added, looking up at a couple of windows from which knots of officers' heads were visible. "It is only right for me to call on Major Bagshaw first, and not ask him to come down to me."

"Always right in form and matter, Sir Denis," replied Captain Desmond. "We'll leave the ladies to criticise Nash, Wilmot, Everest, and Boyle, who have been taking a good peep for the last ten minutes."

Sir Denis and his nephew walked across the barrack-yard to the senior officer's quarters. The ladies sat silent for a moment.

"Mab, why did you give my hand a squeeze just now?" asked Miss Butler.

"I, Mary dear!—a squeeze! When?" replied Miss Fraser, with a little tremor in her voice. "I am sure I was not aware of it."

"Why, your hand is trembling now as you speak, Mab; and as to squeezing, I really thought it was Cousin Gerald's great paw for the moment."

I listened! for my life I could not help it.

"If this happened when Gerald appeared, I should have fancied it was a case of love at first sight. Are you well, Mab dear?—you are trembling still."

"It is only a little nervousness—all these men staring at us, perhaps," replied Miss Fraser. "It will go off presently."

"Before dinner hour, I hope, at all events, my child," said Miss Butler, affectionately. "And now, what do you think of him?"

"Of whom, Mary?"

"Of whom, Mab? How provoking you are. Don't you know?
—I can only mean *mon beau cousin*."

"Well, Mary dear, he is indeed *bel et beau*—splendid eyes, fine hair, wonderful teeth, and graceful manner. Is his nose Roman, or Grecian, or what is it?"

I did not catch Miss Butler's reply. Whether Mabel Fraser knew that I was there, within a few feet of her, crouching down like a beaten hound, with my face pressed against the wall, and my hands quivering as they pressed back my hair from my ears, so that they might drink in every word, I cannot tell; but in my excitement, when they were speaking of me, I had leant over till I could look above the sill, and for a glint—the fragment of a second—her eye, I fancied, caught mine. She started at all events, and then I could only judge by the words I heard what effect the sudden apparition had had upon her. And yet she must have been prepared for my coming! I had heard she was at the Castle, and I asked myself, in the name of all that is wonderful, what was Mabel Fraser doing here? Where was her father? What part was she—was he—playing now?—what meshes were they weaving round my darling? Justly or not, I had become full of suspicion as to the purpose and character of Mabel Fraser. Oh, Heaven, give me patience and fortitude! Watch and be still! There is—there can be—no hope for you; but at least you can live to serve her. What are they saying now? I cannot hear. Mary's voice has sunk to a whisper. Now she speaks:

"Here they come, Mab. My uncle is escorting the redoubtable Bagshaw, who has several smaller agas in attendance on him; and here is great Gerald the lady-killer; but I don't see Terence Brady. Mab, prepare to receive infantry!"

The carriage drew a few feet ahead from the window.

At that moment there was a knock at my door, and I crawled away on my hands and feet across the room to get at my coat and the rest of the clothing which a man should put on who is only in slippers and towelling.

The head of Mr. Stubbs, the Major's boreman, appeared.

"The Major sent me to say, sir, he would thank you to come round as soon as you can, as he wants to introduce all the officers to Sir Denis Desmond and the family before they dine at the Castle this evening."

"I know—that is—all right! Say I'll be round presently." How I got into my uniform I know not. The barrack-yard seemed to swim round as I walked towards the carriage, now the

centre of a circle composed of every available officer and the object of every disengaged eye. All the young men were chatting and laughing in a most heartless way as I approached.

"Oh," interrupted Major Bagshaw, catching a glimpse of me, and drawing himself up in his grand manner, "Sir Denis, another of my officers; Miss Butler, allow me to present to you——"

To the Major's great surprise, Miss Butler cut his introduction short. Holding out both hands, she exclaimed, "And here you are at last, Terence! Oh, I am so glad to see you, and in this old place again! Uncle, this is our old friend, Mr. Brady, of whom I must ask pardon for calling him Terence just now." (If she knew how the little word had shot through me like a flame!) "You know all about him and his people. Welcome to Kilmoye once more!"

Sir Denis took my hand kindly, and looked into my face with his hard grey eyes. "Mr. Brady, I knew your father, and I have heard much of you," he said. "The longest thing I can remember is my farewell visit to Lough-na-Carra to your grandfather, when he told me I must come back a nabob. But stay, my niece has forgotten to introduce you to Miss Fraser. Mabel, let me present to you Mr. Terence Brady."

Miss Fraser never raised her eyes as she bowed; her lips murmured something, and I stammered out—

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Fraser before."

"What! You haven't been in India, have you? Oh, I forgot, Mabel, that you were with—with your father—when that affair took place," remarked Sir Denis. "You met in Dublin, I suppose?"

"Yes, in Dublin, sir."

"And here was Mab keeping all this to herself!" ejaculated Mary. "Never to tell me that you knew my old friend and playmate, Terence, of Lough-na-Carra, Mab! It was too bad."

Miss Fraser seemed ill at ease. She said, gently, "I think I only saw Mr. Brady once—or twice was it? He dined with us on the night papa was so dreadfully injured; I'm sure he will feel it is a painful recollection—at least it is for me."

Sir Denis's eyes were fixed on me still. He had a manner, I found, of fixing his gaze on one for a long time. Bagshaw and his young men were rather put out at finding "the Pill" such a prominent person. Gerald, who was absent when I joined the group, made his appearance. "So here is your friend at last. I have made it right with Captain Savage, sir, if you approve. He will take my duty."

The Major was affable. He looked forward to frequent visits at

the Castle, where cook and cellar were good, and he had heard the woodcock were plentiful in the season too.

"I advise you, Mr. Brady, to slip round to us as quietly as you can," said Sir Denis, "for I'm told the tenants, the people who remember your grandfather and old times at Lough-na-Carra, intend to draw you in triumph up the Castle avenue."

"Oh, doctor, do let yourself be dragged in triumph ! It would be tremendous fun, uncle, I think," drawled Gerald. "It would make us all feel so deuced small too ; and the only compensation we could give ourselves would be to order the band to play us from this to the Castle."

"The people are greatly attached to Mr. Brady's family," said Miss Butler, gravely ; "but I am sure they will just do whatever he pleases."

There was a pause. Gerald leant his arms on the carriage and looked at the young ladies without speaking. Major Bagshaw examined the arms on the panel, and tapped his brass spurs together ; the agas got from one uneasy attitude into another, till Sir Denis sounded the dismiss by taking out his watch. "I had no idea it was so late. Mary, just call round by the Careys and ask the girls over, and persuade the Lawlers, minus the two maiden aunts, to come, if you can. Thomas, drive to Kilmoyle Court and round by Drishane, and call back for me at the magistrates' office."

Major Bagshaw effected a military salute of great dignity—the agas in degree, each after his kind, threw off an adieu—the impudent Gerald kissed hands, and as the carriage rolled out of the barrack-gate, Sir Denis and his nephew and I were left standing alone.

"Uncle," quoth Captain Gerald, "she is certainly a beautiful girl."

"Well, upon my word, I'm glad you have made up your mind on that point. Mary will be greatly flattered."

"Oh ! Mary, of course.—But I mean the other—that is," said Captain Desmond, a little embarrassed, "I think she is a most charming person, that Miss Fraser. Tell me all about her."

"You'll hear soon enough," said Sir Denis, drily. "We shall see you at seven. I will send whatever horses I can spare for you all, and I think there will be carriage room for the whole party."

Gerald gazed after his uncle. "A very tough old person," he observed. "They say India tries a fellow ; just look at him ! I'd back his life against mine to-morrow. I'll put myself under your wing, and we'll go together to this ridiculous old Castle,

doctor, which I am anxious to see, at any rate, ere it be annexed by some Irish chieftain. I can just remember the big staircase, an old picture gallery, and a broken pane of glass in my bedroom, which I dare say I could find still in statu quo, if I had a ramble over the premises."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CASTLE DINNER.

WHAT a change a few years had made in Kilmoyle ! Never very prosperous, it seemed to have fallen into the last extremity of wretchedness. The fair was over, and all that remained of it was here and there a country cart in the street outside a public-house, or a late pig going home in charge of its new owner, and perhaps more customers than usual in the shebeens. I put on a shooting jacket, and went out of the barrack unobserved, noting the evidences of decay, and recalling the old times when Kilmoyle seemed to me the centre of civilized life. Rafferty's great establishment, where I was wont to purchase the stirring battle-scenes and the card-soldiers, which I coloured to my heart's content with gamboge and carmine,—had disappeared. That was indeed a shock to the sensibilities. The house had been altered, and the large window built up, and in the space wherein had once been displayed treasures in endless profusion—toys, prints, paint-boxes, fishing-rods, guns, Manchester goods, confectionery, bonnets, scythes, hats, books, grocery, pickles, stationery—an assortment, in fact, which made "Rafferty's Emporium" a sort of sample repertory for all the trades and manufactures—were "Notices" from the "Board of Works," and the "Board of Poor Laws," and "Emigration Commissioners," and "Rewards" for criminals, and serious literature headed "Proclamation, Dublin Castle," and ending "God save the Queen." The "Desmond Arms" had degenerated into "Lodgins and entertainment for man and Beast." The old coach days were over, the branch railway to Knockdown had given Kilmoyle a wide berth, and the Board of Works had constructed a road which carried away all that had been left of the traffic. But for a galvanic touch from the fair or the market, and an occasional visit from an Inspector of something or other, Kilmoyle would have died out of mere lethargy. I could not resist going into the old house—the landlady I knew had been gathered to her people across the ocean ; she had gone off to her

sons in America when the famine broke out. But the bar-room was still there; the glass-window had generally become opaque from brown paper, yet I could still see the old engraving of the "Right Honourable the Earl of Belbrook, Master of the Kilmoyle Hunt," facing the portrait of "Sir John Desmond, M.P., delivering his famous speech in the Irish House of Commons, in 1782;" and the fox in the glass-case over the fireplace, which looked perfectly capable of giving a repetition of the immortal run, which finished more than half the countyside, and secured him the honour of being stuffed and housed. There, too, on the opposite wall was the monster trout, "killed by Richard Butler, Esquire, on a midge below Carra Bridge, 10th June, 1819," struggling to keep itself together; and there were the natural history collections made by the landlord—a gamekeeper on the Desmond estates—the horned owl, the bittern, the large diver, the solitary snipe, the mottled woodcock, and polecats, and weasels, which rendered a visit to the little parlour one of the delights of my childhood.

There were some men drinking at the table, who rose as I entered, because I had a better coat on my back, and "might be" somebody who had power in the land. They sat down at my request, and eyed me in silence with that shy, curious, inquiring, half-frightened look one must have seen to be able to describe. The landlady—how different from my dear trim Mrs. Dempsey of old; her clean mob-cap, her handsome features and tidy buxom figure—inquired, "What my honour would like to taste?" and was much relieved when she found I aspired no higher than a glass of "cordial."

"Maybe, your honner," said one of the men at the table, after looking at me for some time, "is a sthranger in these parts?"

"Not quite," I replied. "I have been here before."

"Faith, your honner, I'm surprised you ever came back to it. There's few that can lave Kilmoyle ever come back to it again."

"Ah, thin, you're talkin' to the gentleman as if he was one of us," observed a gnarled, obsequious old man next him. "Don't you see he's one of the quality, Maguire?"

"I'm nothing of the kind," said I. "I have just to do as I am bid, and to go where I'm sent, and to earn my bread by doing my duty."

"Maybe," inquired the first speaker, more familiarly, "you are belongin' to some of them up at the Castle beyont?"

"No; I belong to nobody, my good man. I am merely a visitor here, though I am likely to stay here for some time. And now, let me ask you a question or two."

Silence, and suspicion, and uneasiness again.

"You need not be afraid," I continued. "I'm not a sub-inspector, or a revenue officer, or a county surveyor, or a land agent. I am just a poor gentleman belonging to a family which once lived in this county, and I should like to ask you, if you belong to the neighbourhood, a question or two about the friends of my father's family."

"Would your honner tell us the name you have, that we might know who we're spakin' to? Ould Pether Phelan there knows most of the raal families about here——"

"Not yet, my man—all in good time. Can any of you tell me what has become of an old college friend of mine, Mr. Maurice Prendergast?"

There was a quick glance of intelligence—almost of alarm—exchanged between the men.

"Mr. Maurice Prendergast!" exclaimed Phelan, doubtingly. "Ah! thin I think I hard tell of the name before. It's not Mr. Maurice, of Carra-Linn, you mane? Him that went to the bad wid the Young Ireland boys, and bad 'cess to them?"

"The very same."

"I'm thinking, Maguire," said Peter Phelan, after a pause, "I read it in the papers that he escaped off to the States wid some of the others."

"And where is his sister?"

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed Maguire; "and your honner knows Mr. Maurice had a sisther—God purtect her, the darlin', this day and every day, amin! An' indeed, an' indeed, yer honner, if we could have kept her among us we would; but she's goin' out to Amerikey to join her brother. She's still at the ould house, but the place is to be sould; there'll soon be some upstart dhrivin' the people off the land; and the Prendergasts that held up their heads wid the proudest Desmonds, or Butlers, or Carews, will be workin' among sthrangers for their bread in a sthrange land. It's mighty quare how God Almighty lets such things go on."

"They're not as bad as the Bradys, of Lough-na-Carra, anyway," remarked Peter. "They say the ould place must be put up for sale soon, and that the docthor's grandson—Lord be good to him!—is about to go off to Ingy, as a poor bone-setther in a ridgment—that's what I hear, any way."

"But the Prendergasts always stood up for the rights of the people."

"And so did the Bradys!" interrupted Phelan. "Show me a man that was ever kinder to the poor, or a better magistrate than the ould doctor."

"Oh ay! that's throe enough. But thin they weren't of

the ould faith. An' it's myself heard young Brady was one of them that informed against Mr. Maurice when he was in thrubble."

"The Bradys never were given that way, Mat Maguire, and it's I that knows it's false," said the third man at the table, who had not yet spoken. "I heard from them that ought to know, Mr. Maurice told his sister young Brady saved his life."

"And doesn't the whole country know," shouted Maguire, "young Brady stood second to that Orangeman who hit Mr. Maurice, in the jewel?"

"And why not, if he was his frend—and they fought fair?"

"It may save you disputing the point," said I, "if I tell you that Mr. Prendergast and Mr. Brady, though they did not agree in politics, parted good friends, and Mr. Brady sheltered him when he was pursued by the police. I know it, as I was in Dublin at the time."

"Oh! That may be thin. But, for all that, there's no comparing the Prendergasts with the Bradys, ay, or Desmonds either, and that man up at the Castle may find it's true some day."

"Isn't," I asked, "Sir Denis Desmond liked?"

The look on the man's face was answer enough.

"Liked!" he repeated; "to be sure he is by them whose work he does with us. Just as much as he was in Ingy."

"Sir Denis bears the name of being a just and a good man. He is one Ireland ought to be proud of. Why isn't he liked?"

"Well thin, sir, I'll tell you. Because he has no heart. He's got his rights, and his laws, and his agents, and his attorneys, and there's nothing but processes and summonses goin' on agin us! And who dare say a word agin him? Bedad, there'll soon be very few left to do it, unless the sheep take to baahing at him. I don't think his life 'ud be safe from some bad members we've got in the country, but Mr. Maurice wrote to say he'd never set foot in the land agin if there was a hair of his head touched—and that there's not a man, woman, or child, far and near would not die for Miss Mary, God bless her!"

"Come back again? And do you expect Mr. Prendergast back?"

"In the Lord's good time, your honner—and not long, we hope——"

The man who had spoken only once before raised his hand quickly, he put his glass to his lips, looked closely at me as he rose and said, "It will be a fine night, I'm thinking——"

The two other men watched me as he spoke,—and paused; he continued. "I'll bid you good-bye, boys; I'm on my way home,

and I've a long way to go yet." And, taking up his hat and stick, he went out of the house with a "Good evenin', your honner."

I passed out by the narrow hall in which Maurice and I stood long ago waiting for the Sligo mail—upstairs was the room in which my poor grandfather had his first interview when Jacko and Mohun and I arrived in Kilmoyle. I stepped into the street, and, striking out at a rapid pace, took the well-known road to Lough-na-Carra.

Alas! Even nature herself had felt the hand of time. Well-known wooded knolls were sought for in vain; trees had been cut, hedgerows levelled; cabins had been thrown down, walls had been removed, and where there was in my youth a narrow lane, like the course of a torrent filled with stones and small boulders, there was a broad road, in which the grass was growing in patches and encroaching on the wheel-tracks.

I came to the old Lodge at last; the iron gate was open—indeed there would have been little use in closing it, as most of the bars had gone and the lock was broken; the Lodge was deserted, the windows fastened up with moss-covered boards, the roof heavy with weeds. The old oak-trees which lined the avenue to the house had disappeared; the lawn had been turned into arable, save a patch of pasturage for cows and sheep, well rooted up by pigs. The cattle and the sheep, however, were no longer there, but the meadow was trampled into muddy patches near the lake, and the grass was cropped short wherever the weeds were not too rank for food.

Not a soul was to be seen. I passed on towards the house, the dear old familiar house which I thought would be to me like a well-known friend waiting to welcome me at the end of a long journey. Alas! there was no welcome in that dull, dead look. All was in decay. There was an air of want and desolation on the very walls—the woodwork called aloud for a coat of paint to keep it from the jarring weather—in the joinings of the masonry sprouted bright green shoots, which had their roots in the moisture that streaked the stones—the eaves were broken, and gave harbour to the birds, which let straws and feathers flaunt from their nests; the windows were covered with a grey mist, which spoke of uninhabited rooms or lazy housemaids. The door was open; and after a little pause on the threshold, such as one makes ere he plunges into some pool where he has bathed in the olden time, mindful of the ancient surety of the depths, but thinking of the changes that years may have made in the watery recesses, I passed into the hall. I had scarcely glanced round the well-remembered walls,

when the door of the parlour opened ; Mary Butler, with a little basket on her arm, accompanied by a girl of her own age, stood in the old hall before me.

I cannot tell what passed through my head, or why I almost turned to fly. Mary Butler was somehow above surprises, and took all the events of the day just as they came, in the most easy, natural way in the world.

"And so you have come back to the dear old house," said she, holding out her hand. "Ah, how changed you will find it all ! You know Miss Prendergast ? No ! Not your friend Maurice Prendergast's sister ? Let me introduce you, then. Miss Prendergast—Mr. Terence Brady !"

She was a dark-haired, grave young person, with grey eyes and heavy eyelashes, and fine delicate features—tall, slight, and fragile, with a certain air of Maurice about her. She was dressed in deep mourning, with a broad white collar and deep cuffs, which gave her an air of a sister of charity ; and she made me a low curtsy, the like of which I have never seen in my life, though I learnt afterwards it was the mode among the young ladies of the Convent of the "Sacr   C  ur" of Angers. But as our eyes met a slight flush rose to her cheek, and I felt she knew all about me.

"We have been to see poor Mrs. Considine," continued Miss Butler ; "your tenant, you know—for Miss Prendergast sometimes lets me join in her good works."

Miss Prendergast made a deprecating gesture, and said softly, "Dear Miss Butler ! *Your* good works !"

"Would you like to see Mrs. Considine ? She is very weak, you must know, but is full of energy ; and if I let you leave the house without presenting you in your own hall, she would be angry with us. Would she not, Rose ?"

"No," I exclaimed. "Let me not see more suffering in this unlucky house, I beg of you. I came here just out of curiosity ; sauntered up the avenue, came nearer and nearer, saw the door was open, entered, and here I am. I have seen enough, and will wait to make the acquaintance of my tenant, as you call her, some other time."

We turned out of the hall into the old drive, and there were I and Mary Butler walking down the old grass-covered walk as we had done in times gone by, with Maurice Prendergast's sister at my side. We walked in silence till we came to the Lodge ; a tax-cart, with a page at the horse's head, was standing in the road.

"Now, Rose, as you are so obstinate, I am going to leave you at home, and Mr. Brady must walk back as he came—I dare say

to his great content, as he certainly has not encouraged us to interrupt his meditations. As we came along, I dare say you thought as much of old times as I did ; you can tell me when we meet at dinner. Good-bye ; you have only two hours to dispose of till we meet."

And she rattled away in the tax-cart, with Miss Prendergast by her side, and the small boy perched up behind.

I was looking after the two young girls, and making an immense number of fine speeches to them both—to myself ; for I am and was a perfect repertory of *mots d'escalier*—when I was aware of the presence of a man who seemed to have got out of the hedge on the roadside, and who was coming towards me. I recognized the third man at the table of the "Desmond Arms," and I replied to his salutation by a "Good night, my man," in anticipation of the darkness, yet two hours distant. I was passing on, when he raised his hat, and said, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Brady, but I thought I couldn't be mistaken when I saw you in the inn to-day, and I've made sure of it since. Shure and I'm ould Dan's son, the Loughna-Carra fisherman, you know, and proud he'll be to see your honner once more."

"Oh, Dan ! good old Dan ! Tell him to come to me to-morrow. I shall be delighted indeed to see your father."

"Ah, sir," said the man, "it's asy to say come, but the poor ould man couldn't stir unless the saints cured his rumatiz ; the wet and could has crippled him entirely. But maybe your honner could find time some day to come up to Coolbawn, and you'd do him more good than all the docthors in college."

I made a promise to go some day, and was about to continue my walk towards Kilmoyle, when the man, with upraised hat, stopped me, and said significantly, "You were wishing to hear of Mither Maurice ? Miss Rose passed you just now, wid darlin' Miss Butler. Isn't she a darlin', sir ? Maybe, when your honner comes to see the ould man, I'll be able to tell you something of Mr. Maurice. Oh, God knows he's hard set this blessed day ! Good night and long life, sir, as you're going to dine at the Castle. It's good news I'll have for the ould man. God bless you sir !" And so went his way.

Although I ought to have been to the manner born, I really knew very little of my countrymen—of the race which of all others requires a special knowledge, and which needs a more exact application of that science of "knowing the people"—that avails so much in government and in social politics, and is so different from "knowing the world" or "mankind"—than any on earth. It struck me with wonder that this man should be aware that I

was Terence Brady, that he should be so sure I was going to dine at the Castle, that he should dive so deep as he seemed to do into my secret when he spoke of Mary Butler ; but Mr. Macarthy had been taking a little walk about the barracks, and at that time was acquainted with as much of the history of each officer as was revealed by his name and by his servant's experience of his master's family connections and circumstances. When I reached the barracks it was time to dress for dinner, but I had some difficulty to escape the crowd of Lough-na-Carra folk who came to welcome the good old doctor's grandson to Kilmoyle. Some old servants whom I remembered as boys and girls crept out of their hovels, anxious to show me their little children—to see how I had grown, and to talk to “the young master,” whose heritage was small indeed ; and as I emerged from the handshakings and reverences of the little crowd, and passed into the courtyard, under a volley of “God bless your honner, Masther Terence !” I was bantered by the young gentlemen on the subject of my very numerous and select acquaintance. As Gerald Desmond was driving over to the Castle, I hoped every moment he would say something about Mary Butler, but he only mentioned her once, and that in a careless, indifferent way, which made me angry for a moment, though I could not well say why. As to Miss Fraser, he was much more demonstrative, and he listened with evident interest to my account of Colonel Fraser. I pointed out to him all the beauties of the place, and was favoured with his opinions in return. He did not hesitate to indicate an intention to carry out very extensive alterations if ever he had the chance. But he was not prepared for the fine old pile, and could not suppress an exclamation of surprise as a bend in the avenue brought the façade into full view, with the declining sun lighting up the long lines of windows.

I scarcely knew the old Hall of the Castle. Splendid trophies of arms had taken the place of the foxes' heads and the ancient implements and results of the chase by land and water, which had been attached to the walls. Polished blades of damasked steel, long-barrelled matchlocks mounted in gold and ivory, chain armour and coats of mail, shields, sheaves of arrows and long lances, glittered in well-designed devices all around, and the floor was covered with tiger and leopard skins. Throughout the house all was changed—and very much for the better. When I entered the drawing-room it was difficult to believe I was in the grim, vast, comfortless apartment which Mary and I now and then were audacious enough to turn into a playground. Sir Denis and his niece were already surrounded by a number of the guests invited beforehand to celebrate the arrival of the Bengal Tigers in Kil-

moyle. It was Sir Denis's first large dinner. There was Lord Belbrook of course, and Sir Aymeric Boyle; there was an assemblage of Caseys and Croftons and O'Briens and Lawders and Nesbitts; the Earl of Mullinahone was expected, so was the Baroness O'Toole; but to the great disgust of the young ladies, our Major had given the word for black coats and white cravats, instead of our lovely scarlet with gosling-green facings and gold lace.

"Old Bag pays weddy money to his outfittaw," observed our spoiled ensign, "and ways cast-off waytaw's dwess clows, which is cheepaw than wed clawth and twinsel."

And so the "stwappaws," as he irreverently termed the Misses Clochetour, the three blooming daughters of Lord Belbrook, who was an intensely domestic resident peer, were hard set to conceal their disappointment as one Bengal Tiger after another came in with his black tails pendant behind him. Sir Denis caused a small horror and delight when, as the clock struck seven and dinner was announced by a dark-visaged major-domo, he led Mrs. Casey down to dinner without waiting for the Right Hon. the Earl of Mullinahone, a full representative peer, and completely disregarded an intimation from Sir Aymeric Boyle, who was placed in a distant window, that the "Baroness's old greys had just turned the corner." Such a banquet had not been attempted in the house since Dick Butler's wedding, and only the County Dinner once every three years commanded such an array of guests; but Sir Denis was accustomed to "Burra Khanahs," and had love of state and pomp about him. The liveries of the Desmonds had never showed to such advantage as when in all their newness they were set off by the snow-white dresses of the Hindostanees, who, with their arms folded on their breasts, and the heraldic devices of their master embossed on silver plaques on their scarlet and gold turbans, and on the sleeves of their flowing robes, stood at intervals around the table. The Honourable Letty Clochetour, who was of a romantic habit of mind, declared she was quite sure they were princes kept in captivity by the terrible annexer of Auripore; but her aunt, Mrs. Casey, who took rather a practical view of men and manners, vowed they were perfectly useless and quite spoiled her dinner by the way their eyes rolled about. The Countess O'Toole, who was the relict of an ancient Count of the Holy Roman Empire, condemned by her husband's will to live in a land he had carefully avoided, was in good humour for once, as no offence had been caused to her dignity as a Baronin Von Clam-Beck by any ill-regulated matter of precedence in handing in to dinner. She settled down quite good naturedly

next to Gerald Desmond, whose German was just strong enough for quiet dialogue. The Earl of Mullinahone, on whose face a gleam of anger was visible when he entered the room, towards the middle period of the first epoch of dinner, was mollified by Mary's sweet face and welcome as he took a vacant chair beside her, far away from me, and by a prawn curry of surpassing excellence. Altogether there was a triumph, although the spoiled ensign became excited and drank more wine than was quite good for him, in spite of Bagshaw's reprehension of the premonitory symptoms conveyed in repeated frownings.

But where was Miss Fraser all the time? She had not appeared in the drawing-room—she was not there when we went from table in straggling talkative procession. I wondered at her absence, but did not venture to ask any question.

A servant summoned Miss Butler ere I could speak to her. She returned hurriedly and went to Sir Denis, who was engaged in a small debate on the land question with the county magnates, and spoke to him anxiously. He listened attentively, and then, glancing round the room, came over to a secluded corner where I had thrown up a breastwork against Miss Josephine Casey, and said in a low voice—"You would oblige me if you could step into the long corridor. You know the house well; I shall be with you in a moment."

It was not long, in effect, ere he came out to the old passage, in which I was pacing up and down, and, drawing his arm within mine, said, as he continued his walk: "Mr. Brady, I have sent for Doctor Duke, but meantime you will oblige me, perhaps, by seeing Miss Fraser, who has had severe fainting fits since you saw her at the Barrack. I am sorry the first time you visit the Castle since your boyhood you should have occasion to see a patient, but I dare say you will not object to such an interesting charge. It is only a little weakness, I suppose. But it's strange and alarming."

Presently I was standing by Mabel Fraser's side. Mary Butler held her head in those fair round arms, and looked anxiously in my face as I felt her pulse. The room was in disorder. The looking-glass lay broken on the floor. The toilet table was overturned.

"Oh! Miss Mary, the poor dear has been very bad again since you left!" ejaculated the maid. "I a'most feared she'd have hurt herself, or jumped through the window."

Mabel Fraser lay calm as a sleeping child in her friend's arms, but her eyes were open and staring into vacancy, with an expression of horror or fear. She had been dressing for dinner

when the illness first came on ; her maid left the room for a moment, and was on her way back, when she heard screams, as if of distress and fright, and voices—she was quite sure of that—voices—her young mistress's and another person's—in the room, and, running in, she found the window open, and Miss Fraser crouched in a corner, unable to speak, "looking just as she does now." The pulse was very feeble and very fluttering. I could scarce hear the beating of the girl's heart. The symptoms were those of syncope ; a complete exhaustion of the nervous power, owing to some great shock. Miss Butler, summoned by the maid, discovered her standing at the open window ; she uttered a loud cry on seeing her, and fell into her arms. She could not explain the reason of her alarm. She had been frightened by a sudden noise—something—she could not tell what—in the room, and, not being very well that day, had fainted, as she ran to the bell to ring for her maid. How the window came to be open she could not tell. But it was not at all to be wondered at, as the evening was fine and warm. Then she quite recovered after a while, laughed at herself and her fears, in her own lively way, and promised to make all haste to be down in time for dinner. She sent word to Sir Denis, however, that he must excuse her, on account of a bad headache. A couple of hours afterwards, a servant passing along the corridor heard a violent ringing of the bell and loud cries for help, and, rushing in, discovered Mabel Fraser hiding in terror behind a sofa in the corner, with all the things upset, as we saw them.

What did an assistant-surgeon in the Royal Tigers know of such cases ? I ordered the whole pharmacopœia of the house in my distress. Miss Butler hurried off for *sal volatile*. Susan dashed off for the housekeeper's "drops ;" and I, meantime, attacked the bed for feathers, and burnt enough to wing a dodo.

"Are we alone ?" exclaimed Mabel Fraser, so suddenly, that I dropped a perfect flight of goose down. "Quick ! for the mercy of God, quick !"

"Where ? what ? what am I to do ?"

"To do !" she exclaimed, "to do nothing, to say nothing—to hold your tongue, as I must hold mine, though I die. Ah, would to God I could ! Oh, Heaven, *how* I would thank thee." And she raised her eyes with an expression so despairing, so pitiful, that I was rooted to the spot, and stood with my candle in one hand and a bunch of feathers in the other, utterly useless and intensely sympathetic.

Mabel Fraser turned her eyes down and caught mine. "Ah ! my poor boy," she said, tenderly and softly, "there is trouble—

great trouble in store for us both, I fear. Oh! what am I to do? what am I to do?" She beat her hands on her knees, and the wild vague look came into her eyes again.

"You and I! Trouble for us both!" cried I. "I, too! What are you speaking of? I entreat of you to tell me—let me——"

"Hush!" she whispered. "They come. Oh, Mary dear!" she continued, as Miss Butler entered, followed by the house-keeper, the maid, and a servant-girl with a vast medicine chest; "I am so glad to see you, darling. I am myself again. The horrid feeling has gone off. Thanks, Mr. Brady. Quite enough of burnt feathers for to-night, I hope and trust. I shall do now! Pray go! Many thanks! Good night! good night!"

She held out her hand, and as I took it in mine, a glance of great pity and tenderness passed over her face.

"Thanks for all your kindness, Dr. Brady. And now, Mary, darling, go back to the dining-room, and leave me with Susan, or I shall be miserable. I must sleep off this nightmare, or weakness, or whatever it is, which makes me such a nuisance in a well-regulated house. Give my evening 'good night' to dear Sir Denis."

I lingered at the door, but Miss Butler did not come out again. When I went to the drawing-room the company were leaving fast. Sir Denis was uneasy. "Would you mind sleeping here to-night?" he asked. "Dr. Duke is off to aid in an interesting event, which may keep him away till morning, and I dare say the colonel will give you leave from barracks to-night."

It was arranged that I was to sleep in the house, and that my servant should come over with my things in the morning. Happy to be under the same roof—well! to be under the roof of the old Castle once more—I sat in my bedroom, which was in the long corridor, at the other end of which Miss Fraser's room lay, and taking up a book tried to read. But my thoughts were fixed on Mabel Fraser, and her strange illness. What extraordinary stupidity I had displayed in reference to our interview when we were alone!

There was a tap at my door. I said, "Come in," and started at the sight of an unexpected visitor. Sir Denis Desmond, in an Indian dressing-gown, opened the door, and sat down at my table.

"I have come to ask you what you make out of it?" he asked. "It is to me inexplicable."

"I cannot say what the cause was, Sir Denis. I thought there might be something wrong with the heart—tight lacing is so mischievous—but I am satisfied Miss Fraser is all right there.

Some cause, which Dr. Duke may be able to discover, is at the bottom of the nervous disturbance; but it is quite beyond my power. I have been thinking over it in every way; but as I am a young practitioner, it is not very surprising if the case is new to me."

"No wonder, indeed," remarked Sir Denis. "I have been to see Miss Fraser, but my questions only seemed to agitate her, and I have come to have a little talk with you. Did you ever read in any of your books"—he went on—"of a case in which a young lady was strong enough to overturn tables and chairs—to speak with two voices—to be unconscious and yet to be violently agitated at the same time? You need not answer, of course. There is something about this illness neither of us can understand." He tapped the table with his fingers whilst he reflected for a few moments. I watched the shadows pass over his resolute, hard, and handsome features so closely that I blushed when he met my gaze with his steady glance, and asked me, curtly—"Do you know who Miss Fraser is? I mean, have you any idea of how she comes here?"

"Not the least, Sir Denis. I know she is the daughter of Colonel Fraser, who was a friend of my poor father, and of your own, and whom I met in Dublin a couple of years ago or more."

"A friend of your father?" repeated Sir Denis, with a singular expression of the mouth and eyebrow. "Come, let us be frank. Do you know anything more of him? Have you never heard——"

He paused at my supplicating gesture—"I do not wish to hurt you in any way; but, on the contrary, I will and I would do all I could and can to be of real service to you, Mr. Brady. And if this occasion had not come so early, I should have sought one for an explanation of matters which concern us both. Yes, both! You will know why I say so by-and-by. There should be no illusions between us. You are at the outset of your career. You are, I have heard from that excellent old friend of yours, Mr. Bates, exceedingly sensitive about your family secrets. Perhaps there is no one who knows so much of them as I do! You seem surprised, but it is so. Believe me, if I did not think I was bound by duty to do you a service, I would not meddle in anything which relates to the welfare or fortunes of your father's son for his benefit."

"My father, Sir Denis? Good God! How could he have incurred your resentment?"

"My resentment? No, my ——Well, no matter. Let it be enough, that I felt towards him once as one man is like to feel

towards another who has inflicted two great wrongs on his life. Whatever were my own wrongs at his hands, they are atoned for, and are now forgiven, God knows ! After all, perhaps I owe much to your father, though he did not know it. But not so in another case. Next to the love I felt for the girl whom your father married, was the affection I felt for my sister. Need I say more ? You know what happened. The Desmonds, it is said, are not a forgiving race, but the saying is not true. I went out to India a mere boy. I went there with the purpose of making myself a name if I could—of rising in the service to the highest—of carrying out the dreams which, in the old days of Haileybury, filled every boy's head who had any spirit in him, but which are now gone off to the region of Chimera. You know how I have succeeded."

"Yes indeed, Sir Denis," I exclaimed. "We are all proud of you."

Sir Denis's eye sparkled, and his brow was knit as he replied, "I tell you, young man, I have failed miserably. Men whom I scorned and despised—small pitiful pedlers—passed me in the race. I have retired here beaten and disgraced. Ah, you do not know of what I am speaking ? When your father, young man, married the woman on whom I had set my heart, for whom I was working as man perhaps never toiled before, I felt my sun had left the world for ever, and all was dark and vague and purposeless before me. True, she had played others false too. But day by day I had had letters from her, carried hundreds of miles, up to the very moment that the news came. I remember it as if it were yesterday. Such letters ! My God !"

"And how was my father to blame, Sir Denis ?" I asked. "Surely it was most unjust to blame him ?"

"No, sir, it was not. He was bound in honour to the best of women on earth—my darling sister ; and his desertion of her, although she married Richard Butler to please her brother, killed that poor girl as surely as though he struck her with a dagger to the heart. But Heaven knows he suffered for it."

"God knows he did," I repeated. "He did indeed, indeed."

Sir Denis sat moodily and silently, with folded arms, and a frown on his brow, and heeded me not for a time. At length he continued—"You may not be aware why your father was preferred to me. I will tell you, and, in doing so, will acquaint you with some matters which have been, for many reasons, kept secret from you. You are aware—though, as Bates informed me, without knowing the full purport of it—that your great-grandfather married a cousin of the Desmond of that day—a poor cadette of

the family. By the strange fatality which has pursued us, that junior branch became the main line. There have been no direct heirs, male or female, for years back in our house, till my poor sister married Dick Butler, and my brother Gerald married Rose de Lacy. My father came in by collateral descent as heir to his uncle, who succeeded to an uncle also; but he left three sons and one daughter, and it was supposed the curse, which the country people declared was inflicted on us for our loyalty to the Crown, had passed away. And so it has. My brother Richard never married, as you know. I shall never marry, but there is my nephew Gerald to come after me, and my niece, Miss Butler, will have a share of the little that has been left to us. You are wondering to what this leads. Do you not see?"

"Not in the least, Sir Denis."

"Why, to this—that after myself and Gerald Desmond and Mary Butler, my niece, you are absolutely the nearest of kin to the Desmonds of Kilmoyle, if they have no offspring and you survive them. You stare, young man; but I do assure you it is so, nevertheless. The lawyers have been looking into the matter, and it is quite certain. Don't look as if the world was coming to an end."

"I don't want to hear this, Sir Denis. I can't believe it. I can't——"

"But it is no such good news, my young friend. Kilmoyle is in a bad way, and even if it were in a good one, your chance of succession would not be very great."

"Thank God!" I burst out.

"Oh, do not thank God till you know that it is a blessing or a curse. I confess I am not good enough to return thanks for curses, and I don't think it's expected. But now we have got to this point—you understand so much. Can you, if you know anything of your mother's character, now guess why she jilted me—and many more beside?"

"Not in the least, sir. I fear she did not love my poor father."

"Love!" Sir Denis looked at me as though he were about to say some very angry and very bitter thing; but a change came over his face as he went on. "Love him, indeed—no, nor a living soul. She had not even such affection—*storgé* you call it—as the most treacherous and cruel creatures feel for their young. No, she did not love your father. But she got it into her head some way or other that—now, mark me well—if I were put out of the way—for example, if I were to die in India—your father would come into a good chance of the estates. You see, at the

time, my brother Gerald had no child—my brother Dick was unmarried, and was never likely to change his condition—my sister Mary was unmarried. God knows what calculations crossed the brain of that woman. But certain it is she wormed out all the facts connected with the succession—perhaps, too, seeing the weight such arguments lent to his suit, your father may have coloured his sketch a little. But there is no doubt, for I have proofs of it, that she had made up her mind to be mistress of Kilmoyle.”

“And how could she hope to be, sir? There were, as you say, Sir Richard and yourself, and your brother Gerald and your sister Mary all living. One was married—all might marry. It is too fanciful, you will pardon me for saying, to think such ideas ever crossed the mind of a girl of sixteen. My dear Sir Denis, it is really too much.”

“There were, as you say, four of us living; and there was also your grandfather alive at the time. But, for all that, she made her calculations, I can tell you.”

“But,” persisted I, “had she married you at once, there would have been a whole mass of natural obstacles swept away. Why should she have married my father?”

“That is the most natural remark in the world, and it is difficult to explain the reasons without knowing what she was. But I had unwittingly hurt her pride and aroused her devilish animosity, and she hated me—yes! hated me!—even while she was sending me letters every day full of honeyed words, ill-spelt at times, by the way. I told her I never would marry till I had attained a certain position, and that I would divide all I had, if ever I came into Kilmoyle, with my sister Mary. And as to chances, Mary, my sister, might not marry, or might not have children. The same of my brother. As to what she looked forward to, I would rather not say; but it is my conviction that she intended to make her husband’s chances pretty good. She has a great power of staying, as they say, and a firm belief in fate, and in her fortunes.”

I own the whole tenour of Sir Denis’s statement had by this time thrown me into a maze, in which doubts of his sanity and of my own identity were uppermost by turns.

“Well, I may as well go on to the end,” he added, “for it is right you should know the story. Whether the reasons assigned for her choice are right or wrong, I believe them to be true. The secret passion of her life—the only affection she has—is a plot. If she married me there would have been little to plot for. She could no more move in the open than could a tiger. But there has been always

a strange fatality about all her calculations. The plot comes to a certain degree of development, and then she is crossed by some small obstacle, or a clumsy blow breaks through the spider's web. Three months before she married your father, my brother Gerald's wife presented him with a son and heir ; the first news she received on reaching Calcutta was the birth of my niece Mary, and the death, alas ! of my poor sister. Then it was perhaps she resolved to make a new *coup*, and you are aware of the famous stratagem she employed. When she found by chance or planning that Fraser, one of her many lovers, was a fellow-passenger, her ceaseless activity of brain played her a bad turn. She heard he was likely to come in for a great fortune ; but before she committed herself, she tried what stuff I was made of,—if I could still be turned to account. As soon as she landed, she told Fraser some story to delay the marriage, and meantime sent off to the Court to which I had just been appointed. Well, I returned her an answer, which I have no doubt gave her little concern, though I tried to put into every line some of the bitterness with which she had filled my life. She married, as she thought, her poor dupe—as it turned out, her master. Alan Fraser was just the man she deserved to win in such a game. He was her better, and at her own play, too. He admired and I believe loved her, and the story of his great expectations was spread by him through his servants to entrap her. He had married, soon after your father's wedding, a poor girl who deserved a better fate than befel her, and she died a short time before Fraser set out for Europe."

"Miss Fraser," I interrupted, "is the daughter of that marriage ?"

"Colonel Fraser's wife did not think so," replied Sir Denis. "Soon after the birth of the infant, in Fraser's absence on duty, Mrs. Fraser was attacked by a malady from which she never recovered, and she died declaring that the babe, which Fraser—the only good trait in his nature I know of—loved so tenderly, was not her child. Some months after Mrs. Fraser died, Colonel, then Major Fraser, was appointed to a post in the North West ; and there appeared with him a beautiful woman, who was introduced as his wife. But though morality is not very tight-laced in India, society was shocked by such outrageous indecency, and the new-comer was never received. Presently the Bazaar was filled with stories of violent scenes between him and his new wife ; one night she left him, never to return again. It would be foolish to suppose that two such persons did not keep up their old relations whenever it could be of service. You are of course scarcely prepared to hear it said that Mabel Fraser is not the

daughter of the first Mrs. Alan Fraser, and that she was placed in the arms of the nurse by a woman who took away the innocent child, over whose fate there is such a veil ? ”

Was I in the flesh, listening to the words of a sensible, reputable country gentleman in an Irish country-house in the middle of the nineteenth century ?

“ It is not surprising, indeed, Terence Brady, if what I tell you takes away your breath. Mind you, there is no proof ; but I have a moral conviction that the poor child above whom we call Mabel, was for some inscrutable purpose substituted for the child of Mrs. Fraser at Harungabad.”

“ And why, then, do you keep her in your house, Sir Denis, and allow her to be called Miss Fraser ? Pardon me, but I think you do wrong.”

“ If she had gone back to India she would have assuredly fallen into the hands of that woman. It was with great pleasure—with something too of my old feelings for her who crossed one’s path as lightning passes through an oak, to leave its mark for ever—I took the girl to be my niece’s companion—to be, in fact, my second daughter—out of a wicked and awful future. And now you know more than all the world beside, except three persons, of a very strange story. Many parts of the relations between myself and others in whom you are interested I pass over ; but I tell you so much that you may know what an interest I have in you, and know what I must prevent. And now one word more. I wish you to pay heed to it, and to take it as I mean it. The Desmonds and Bradys have done each other no good. It is my duty to prevent any renewal of disastrous alliances. You understand me, I see. Enough. God bless you, and good-night.”

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW.

IT was daylight when Sir Denis Desmond rose to leave my room. When he went forth there was a darkness on my soul which no sunlight could clear away.

Dr. Duke had come and gone ere I was up in the morning. He left a general impression of indigestion behind him. “ It was all liver,” he said.

Sir Denis did not appear at breakfast. Miss Butler and Gerald and I sat down after prayers at the little round table in the study.

"And what the deuce is really the matter with the pretty creature?" asked Gerald, with a slice of tongue on his fork. "My man says she had a regular up-and-down fight with the Evil One, or a burglar, or Captain Rock, and that the room is filled with tokens of a regular bruising match. And I ask what is it? Dr. Duke says it was a severe nervous attack, the result of indigestion. Dr. Brady can't say what it was. But why did the dear young lady knock all the Castle properties about? If the boys get hold of the story there can be no convictions on fair days for broken heads and sundries. It will all be nervous attacks and indigestion. Why, you both look as if you had been out with the witches! You are as white as a snowdrop, my fair cousin; and the Doctor has the air of a man who has been on a broomstick all night. And do you know," he continued, more seriously, "I had my adventure too last night. It is really quite delightful nowadays to find a house with a little sensation in it, when there's no Cock Lane ghost, and no haunted mansion in Fleet Street."

"Indeed, cousin!" said Mary; "I suppose you had some difficulty in finding your way back to your room from that little cave which my uncle condemns all smokers to inhabit whilst they are enjoying themselves?"

"Well, it was not exactly that, but it arose out of the cave question nevertheless. You are quite right in abusing that frightful coal-cellar, cousin Mary, and you and I must agitate for a reform. *A bas la bastille!* I was choking there, and so I told that old mummy to let me out into the garden. As the night was fine, I trotted up and down along the tiled path, as happy as a man with a peaceful conscience and a good cigar could be, till my weed was done, and then I turned to go in. As I reached the door, which had been left ajar, the dogs were barking tremendously in the outer yard; I thought the doctor had come. I had told the old man not to sit up, and was putting up bars and bolts as I promised him, when I saw, just at the grated window by the side of the door, a pair of great big eyes looking in at me."

"Eyes! cousin Gerald—what eyes?"

"Ah, that's the question. Not yours, cousin Mary, I can swear—nor Miss Fraser's, though, 'pon my honour, they were like hers. I unbolted the door and popped out in an instant;—my candle went out too,—but I heard the boards at the doorstep creak, and I thought I could make out a figure in the dark—ran straight on—hit my face against a wall, and gave up my ghost."

"But surely, Gerald, you are joking?" asked Mary, in some alarm. "You must tell my uncle of this apparition. The

country is very much disturbed, and this ought to be looked into."

"The face? It was a pretty one. Like Miss Fraser's, too! The old black fellow, who was up in spite of my orders, coolly said it was the house dog, which is in the habit, he says, of putting its nose to the window and scratching to get in. If so, the house dog has very fine eyes and hair, and a very white skin, I can tell you."

"Are you serious, cousin Gerald?" urged Mary, very gravely.

"Not at all, but very truthful, my dear coz," quoth Gerald, tapping an egg. "'Pon my word! It is so very jolly to find something out of the common, and I'm in love with this place already—not to say a word of all that it inherits. What do you think of it all, Doctor? Have you seen—Hullo, Doctor!"—he stopped tapping, and laid down his egg-cup suddenly—"why, there again! you look as if you had been having two bad nights with the ghosts. Do you see one now?"

"Yes, indeed, Terence," added Miss Butler. "You have a most uncanny aspect this morning! We really are objects for compassion! Uncle Denis is not very well; Mabel Fraser is only just becoming a sensible creature; you, Gerald, have been frightened by an owl, and Terence—Dr. Brady I mean—looks as much alarmed as he did the day I gave him a scolding for telling a fib! What can it all mean?"

"It means all sorts of fun. I am quite in good spirits for the first time since I came to my own—my native land. Ghosts, and mysteries, and rebels! Smugglers, and witches, and fainting damsels! And, talking of rebels, what a pretty girl that rebel's sister is you drove through Kilmoyle. Had she been Flora McIvor, withering a Hanoverian of the day with a glance, she could not have looked more haughtily at me. I almost regretted you were good enough to make her conscious of my existence."

"Cousin Gerald, if you only knew how much Rose Prendergast has suffered, you would pity her from the bottom of your heart. She will leave us very soon for America; and, if ever goodness of soul and the disposition of an angel deserve happiness in this world, she will find it."

"'Pon my word, cousin, I hope so for the sake of your friend—even in America. If a scornful beauty can deserve a good husband, and if Miss Prendergast thinks she can share her goodness with any kind fellow, I trust she may meet some one worthy of her in the New World! Doctor, it is time for us to set out for Kilmoyle, unless you are quite indifferent to the safety of the 'Bengal Tigers.'"

I had not closed my eyes all night. I turned and tossed in agony of mind for weary hours. That I was connected somehow or other with the Desmonds, I knew ; but the revelation made to me, by Sir Denis last night was all but incredible. And then the ominous words as he parted. Had he penetrated my secret thoughts?—nay, the very fancies which came unbidden as dreams, and which in every conscious moment I chased away? Did I wear my heart upon my sleeve, for every daw to peck at? If he suspected me, did not Mary Butler suspect me too? Must she not know that I was guilty of loving her? And if she did, how dreadful was the punishment of her calm indifference! I was wroth that Sir Denis Desmond should dare to warn me, as if I were a base schemer or sordid plotter. The poorest wretch that crawls can love whom he lists, and, if love wills it, he cannot if he would be free. I would execute a solemn act, renouncing every claim, in any possible way, to the remotest benefit from these accursed estates. Sir Denis might probe: he should not find the wound though he killed me. I would take away every pretext for his jealousy of my purposes, and, if legal forms could do it, I would cut off every interest that could come to me, if every Desmond were dead to-morrow, in those beggarly acres. I would speak to Mary Butler of the unworthy suspicions of her uncle, and then, if I saw she pitied me, promise that I would never see her again. I would tell her the sad tale of my love; I would ask her forgiveness, and fly for ever from her sight. Poor wretch! When morning came I knew I was too weak to do aught but love on in silence, and to keep my secret hugged close to my heart. I was in a reverie all during breakfast. The strange illness of Miss Fraser—the voices when she was alone—the confusion in her room—the open window—her frenzied alarm—her words to me—and those awful eyes—“like hers,” he said—there was something here again full of vague terror to me. I could not at all account for my apprehensions, or define them. It may be imagined, indeed, that by this time I had ceased to try to account for anything which happened to myself or to those around me. Sir Denis’s revelation was the last mark of confidence I expected from such a man, and the purport of it was certainly as curious as any story well could be. I gave up asking myself why he or any one else did or said anything, simply because I never could get an answer. It was “in the fitness of things,” as poor Sir Richard used to say, that I should be made the sport of other people’s caprices, or antipathies, or likings, and I was about becoming proud of the trouble Fate was taking to vex me for ever, and discovering in my pride some panacea for her persecutions. And, after all, what did it come to?

I was sound in wind and limb—not so sure about the head ; I was young and active ; there was enough to be got out of my profession to live on. I had a very remarkable mother, as it seemed to me ; but she had not taken the trouble of writing to me for a long time. She was aware it led to no good, and, if she knew of my meeting with Colonel Fraser, had made up her mind there would be now less use in trying to turn me to any profitable account than ever. As to Sir Denis's intimation that I was, however remotely, interested in the succession to Kilmoyle, I felt at last no emotion ; indeed, I could not understand it, or bring the notion home to my thoughts. Then Mary Butler, I argued, had not the smallest love for me, or suspicion of my regard for her. Her frankness, her perfect ease and freedom, when I was all reserve and awkwardness, her placid look and open smile when we met, quite satisfied me that Mary Butler had no other feeling than that which animated her to deliver me some lectures, in years gone by, on my juvenile delinquencies.

There are times when a man can shake off the influence of his master-passion and persuade himself it does not exist at all. The stag hard hit with the fatal lead will bound away, so that the stalker shall have no suspicion of the success of his aim, will halt to look round, and then run on till, all suddenly, it falls—never to rise again. Can the poor creature ever believe in its course that the shock of the wound was but momentary, and that the dull pain, passing away, will come back no more ? I felt for two or three whole minutes that I was very supremely indifferent about Miss Mary Butler. Wasn't that eldest Miss Clochetour a much finer girl ? Am I quite sure Miss Casey did not give my hand a little squeeze as I led her to the carriage ? There was no comparison between Miss Butler and Miss Fraser in complexion and hair. In fact, I say, as I am about going off to Barrack, there is no reason to think there is a trace of my boyish passion for the young lady who has evidently made up her mind to be Mrs. Gerald Desmond. As to Miss Fraser, what matters it to me who she is ? She is a friend of Miss Butler, the daughter of that man who was in league with my mother, and who has betaken himself off, never to trouble me again. If she be not his daughter, what matters it ? Her illness ?—She had, Dr. Duke says, "an attack of indigestion." So had Sir Denis Desmond when he came in and kept me up with his meandering narrative. Indians are very much subject to it.

And so, as Gerald Desmond, puffing his cigar, walked on with me by the short cuts which I knew so well towards the town, and rattled away about himself and the world which he was good

enough to permit to revolve around him, I sought to persuade myself that I could control my own destiny and direct my course of my own free will through the stormy sea on which I was launched—"a prey to fortune."

Major Bagshaw was in a state of intense commanding-officerism when we presented ourselves in Barrack. Orders had just come in for the march of the much-vexed Tigers to Ballybottle and Drumnaglass, with the exception of one company—Desmond's, of course—which was to be left at Kilmoyle. Bagshaw was perfectly convinced that there resided in some crypt at the Horse Guards a secret but powerful enemy, whose whole time was passed in devising plans to thwart and ruin him; and he rarely read even the most innocent document without detecting in it some fell purpose of his foe.

"Just see how I'm treated again, Desmond! Like your uncle amazingly! Nice part of the country. Lord Mullinahone delightful—Lord Bellbrook charming; the only nice quarters I've been in, I swear, since I left Corfu. And now that confounded rascal is at me again! Well! Some day I'll be even with him. Some day! or my name is not Emilius Bagshaw."

The Evil One, however, was to have his way for the present, and of course I was to leave Kilmoyle with the head-quarters; but I was in such a state of mind that it really would not have caused me much, if any, uneasiness to hear we were ordered to the North Pole, or the Falkland Islands, or Terra del Fuego.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.

A COUPLE of days after our arrival, when I had visited my sick and felt whisky pulses and examined tongues, and had established a proper equation between my conscience and the exigencies of the service, as represented by Major Bagshaw, and the "Morning State," I sat down to write an account of everything that had occurred since my last epistle to Mr. Bates, who was enjoying his exile with Major Turnbull at Bagnere de Luchon in fierce encounters of chess and protracted dominoes.

I had just finished the letter when my servant came in to say Sir Denis Desmond wished to see me. On going out into the barrack-yard, where he was smoking his cheroot and walking up and down with an abstracted air, he shook me by the hand with

a cordiality not quite characteristic, and taking me by the arm as soon as he had ascertained I was free, said he wished to have a few words with me quietly, in continuation of the conversation we had had at the Castle.

"You are very young, but an old fellow sometimes seeks support in the vigorous immaturity which is growing into life and action. You understand why I have an interest in you, and perhaps there may be grounds for even closer confidence between us by-and-by."

What could Sir Denis imply by these words? I communed with myself as he went on, talking of nothing in particular. Miss Fraser was quite herself again: he hoped she would appear at dinner; there was only a small party indeed—Gerald and Miss Butler, Miss Fraser, and myself. "My niece has persuaded, much against her will, a favourite acquaintance, a Miss Prendergast, to come over to us. She is leaving for America in a few days, and as we are going up to Dublin shortly, she has consented to come. A girlish whim of Mary! The sister of a rascally rebel and an outlaw, whom I have no wish to see inside my doors."

"Miss Prendergast is of a very old and honourable family," I began. "She is sister of that unfortunate Maurice who was my schoolfellow; but, rebel as he was, remember, Sir Denis, how young he is, and, believe me, with all his faults, he was a gentleman and a man of honour. His sister is much to be pitied."

Sir Denis made no remark for a moment or two; I could see he was not pleased with what I said. After a little he drew himself up, and stopped short in our walk.

"Let me give you advice this time, ere I ask for yours by-and-by. Sympathy for treason is dangerous, because it is a poison which spreads and works under the guise of sympathy and pity. You speak of honour and of honourable families; but I tell you, treason is a taint in the blood which destroys all honour. It is this feeble sentimental dallying with conspiracy and rebellion which weakens all authority of law, upsets order, and fosters the deadly disease of chronic disaffection. I warn you against indulging in it. These songs and ballads and stories, old and new, which appeal to our feelings and move compassion, are mischievous—bad in any country which needs all its energies for actual work to keep it alive,—fatal among such a race as our peasantry."

"But think of Cavalier songs and Roundhead canticles, Sir Denis! Think of Lillibulero! And the Jacobite ballads! They do no harm now, though they were once powerful among the people."

"No harm! I'm not so sure of that," retorted Sir Denis, re-

suming his course. "If there were a cause to be sung for, 'Lillibulero' would be mischievous to-morrow. I would discourage all these allusions to the rebellions and the old savagery of this island—prohibit them, if needs were, by law, till the evil spirit was dead, and sympathetic ballads and songs were merely antiquarian amusements. You will say, that would be to act as the Russian acts in Poland. Be it so. Poland will soon cease to give trouble to Russia, and would have ceased ere this but for foreign support and hopes raised abroad. But," continued Sir Denis, "I wish to speak to you before we meet at dinner, about a very different subject. I want to hear how you became acquainted with Colonel Fraser and his daughter?"

The Baronet slackened his pace. I told him of Colonel Fraser's visit to my chambers—the dinner—the occurrence which followed, and his departure without seeing me when I was in jeopardy in Dublin.

"He never mentioned, did he, what was his object in coming to Ireland?"

"Never, Sir Denis. He spoke as if he had come over to see the country—to visit some friends, without any other object."

"But it was not the fact. Alan Fraser is not a man who would go out of his way one half-mile to look at the fairest landscape on earth, or who would move a foot to visit a friend, unless he had an object in it. Well! What did you think of him?"

"Sir Denis, I did not like him. How could I? The moment he mentioned his name I knew the man. It was the name which appeared in the letters from India which my grandfather got long ago; and never would I have gone to the hotel but that I was so anxious to learn about—you understand what, Sir Denis. He tried to deceive me, but I let him see I knew all.

"Believe nothing he told you. Thank your good fortune that he did not close round on you, and pray that your paths may never cross again. It is the best thing for you to wish. You went to sup with this Prendergast, where you met the Indian Rustum who was hanging about Fraser—then you are waylaid coming home—see Fraser leaving a gambling-house—the most likely thing in the world—and next morning hear he was assailed, probably by the ruffians who pursued you. There is something beneath that which I cannot make out. And Miss Fraser—anything of her?"

"I only saw her the evening I dined with them, when I was struck with the likeness to some one—you know who—in a picture in our house at home—a marvellous likeness. And then, again,

when I called to inquire after the Colonel. That foolish duel followed close on the other events of which I am speaking, and they left Dublin whilst the trials were going on."

"You never saw Miss Fraser since?"

"Never till I saw her in the carriage when we arrived in Kilmoyle."

"When did you last hear from your mother?"

"Oh, 'tis a long time now. She wrote me a very singular letter and I took no notice of it, but she has had communications through her lawyers with Mr. Bates. I believe he takes no notice of them either."

"Did she in any of her letters ever mention Miss Fraser's name to you?"

"No, Sir Denis."

"And this picture of which you spoke? You say it is a portrait of your mother, and that it is very like Miss Fraser?"

"As I said, marvellous. It is in the old house close at hand now. I have not seen it for many a day. If you would like to judge for yourself, I am sure Mrs. Considine, the tenant, would have no objection to our looking at it—shall we go?"

"A capital idea. Let us do so, by all means."

In a few minutes more we were at the door of Lough-na-Carra. Sir Denis looked with interest at the ruined house. "A quarter of a century and more," he said, "makes a change. If the walls had eyes, they would perceive as much in me."

The barefooted maiden who took in my name to Mrs. Considine, with a request that she would permit me to pay her a visit, and to look over the old place, returned with her mistress's message that I was at home in Lough-na-Carra, but that she hoped I would excuse her meeting us, as she was ill in bed. "And so she is, poor lady, and mighty bad, too! Miss Butler and Miss Rose—God bless them!—just keeps the life in her."

I led the way to the well-known room, opened the door—"Heavens, it's not there!" I exclaimed in much surprise—"it's gone—the picture's gone."

The frame was empty. It hung discoloured and worm-eaten on the wall.

"There niver was anything there, sir," said the maid, "except what you see, since I've been here, and that's two years come Candlemas-day."

"But there's another," I interrupted, "a picture of a lady with fair hair and a leopard beside her—it hung in the back bed-room opposite the landing at the top of the stairs."

"That's Mrs. Considine's room, sir. There's no such picture

there. But there's a frame empty like that, only brighter a bit. They're just as I always seen them."

"Will you go up and ask Mrs. Considine, with my compliments, if she knows what became of the two pictures of ladies which were in these frames when she came to Lough-na-Carra?"

It was some little time ere the maid returned. "I was waiting till the missus could find the paper in her desh. She says, sir, if you'll read it you'll see how it is."

I opened a folded letter addressed to "Mrs. Considine, Lough-na-Carra," and read :—

"Dublin, March 1st, 18--., Dominick Street.

"DEAR MADAM,—As I am desirous of removing the portrait of Mrs. Brady and the copy thereof on behalf of my ward and client, I beg you will permit the bearer to have them on production of this letter, which will be a receipt for the same to be annexed to your copy of the inventory. I trust to hear better reports of the farming, and that your son may find it more to his taste to assist you in turning the lease to good account. I shall write fully on business very soon, and beg you to believe me, dear madam, your faithful servant,

"J. BATES."

"Why, that is most extraordinary! I never heard of the pictures being taken before!"

"And the missus told me to say to your honour, the gentleman that came took them away with him in a roll, and went off straight from the house with them. You'll see when it was by the date of the letter, for it was three days after it he came, Mrs. Considine says, and she says she hopes it's all right."

"Is it in Mr. Bates' handwriting?" inquired Sir Denis. "Just see."

"It is very like it. And yet I think I see a difference too. The date is oddly enough about the time when Mr. Bates and I were in constant communication about my miserable trial."

"About the time, then, that Colonel Fraser was in Ireland, and made his tour," observed Sir Denis. "It's not at all odd—at least I think I can understand it—and I'm inclined to bet that when you hear from Mr. Bates, he tells you he never wrote that letter. Let us go."

Sir Denis Desmond and Terence Brady walked down the old avenue in silence—at least he did not speak to me nor did I to him; but as he went along at his own quick rate, he muttered to himself at times, and now and then broke into exclamations in a language I could not understand. Not a word passed between us

till we nearly reached the old bridge, and then I reminded him that I had duty at the Barrack before dinner, and that my way lay to the right of the main road.

"I forgot the principal object of my visit to you, but we can have a few minutes after dinner ; and I have leave for Gerald and you to sleep at the Castle. It is connected with the subject I have already mentioned, but as you are going so soon it will be necessary to be more explicit. You will see a good deal of my nephew, and you can form an opinion about him which I shall ask you for presently. I am sure I can depend on you. Good day, Terence, as I venture to call you."

I was so deep in thought that I did not notice a man who was close behind me till he spoke. "Heaven bless your honour ! And could you come to Coolbawn to see the poor old father that says he'll die happy if he claps eyes on you ?"

"Oh ! good day, Macarthy. How far is it then to Coolbawn ? I should like to see the old man if I can."

"Troth, and it's not an hour for you, sir."

"An hour ! And an hour back ! I am very sorry, but I fear I can't do it. It's too late now."

The man seemed disappointed. "And the ridgment's ordered off, I'm tould ! There's more than the ould man would be glad to see you if you'd come. Do, Mr. Terence, if you can—do come."

"More ? What do you mean by more ? I don't understand you."

"Didn't I tell your honour if you liked I might be able to tell you something of Mr. Maurice—of Maurice Prendergast, your true friend ?"

"Well, you can tell me now, Macarthy. It is too late to go to Coolbawn, and I must wait for another day."

"Would your honour care to see any one who has seen Mr. Maurice quite lately ?"

"I should like to hear good news of him, for old times' sake, from any one."

"Listen, your honour. I know a man who saw him not long ago, and I could show that man to you in a minute."

"Well, and where is he ?"

The fellow looked round quickly, with his finger touched his left breast, and said, "Here he is, Mr. Terence !"

"You ! And where have you seen him ? Not in Ireland ? Why, he is in danger of his life. Don't you know he is an outlaw ?"

"Och and och ! an outlaw maybe ! And what would most of us be if the truth was known, Mr. Terence ? Shure, them that has

nothing to do with the law but breaking it, needn't mind much what them that makes the law calls them, as long as they don't come under it! I didn't say where I saw him, and if you don't care to know I'll tell you it was in Amerikay. Good evening to your honour. I'll tell Mr. Maurice the next time I lay eyes on him how sorry you were you couldn't spare time to go out to Coolbawn."

There was a suppressed insolence in the fellow's air which annoyed me, and ere I recovered my temper and wished to ask after the unfortunate exile, the man had turned up a lane and was gone.

When I reached the Barrack, the whole effective force of the officers, headed by the Major, were preparing for their expedition to Lord Bellbrook's. Only Desmond and myself were to dine at the Castle.

There was just time to send off a few lines to Mr. Bates concerning the removal of the pictures, before Gerald's voice summoned me to "come along." Something had quite put him out, and as he gave the reins to me, with a request that I would drive, his hand trembled. He was silent and moody, eyeing me askance, and scarcely noticing the attempts I soon abandoned to rouse him into conversation.

In the drawing-room we found Sir Denis, Mary, and Miss Fraser. The latter was a little pale; she sought to appear perfectly composed, but there was a quivering of the lip and drooping of the eyelid as I entered which could not be repressed. Mary was graver than usual, but gravity became her as much as gaiety; and in whatever mood she might be, she was best.

"Have you read the papers, Gerald? The news looks warlike," observed Sir Denis, at dinner. "If Russia does not give way, we must see Turkey dismembered, or fight." Sir Denis, like most Indians, was a Russophobist. "If we allow the Czar to carry his point, we lose our hold on our Eastern empire."

"I declare, uncle, without the least disrespect to you, I don't think that would very much matter," said Gerald; "but I own I should like a little active service."

"And so should I," exclaimed I. "Active service above all things."

"*Your* active service, my good doctor!" remarked Gerald, with a contemptuous air. "I don't see much fun in *that*! What on earth can a doctor find to like in war? To be sure, there will be work for him to do; but such work! *Chacun à son goût.*"

"Do you know, Gerald," said Sir Denis, "I have seen something of war in our Indian fashion, and have been with men in great

peril and under severe trials, and two or three of the bravest men I ever met—really brave, for they had no excitement to carry them through the danger—were surgeons.”

I was burning with anger, for I twisted Gerald's words into a covert insinuation ; and Mary, who probably guessed what was passing in my mind, broke in with her clear voice, “It seems to us poor women that you do yourselves injustice sometimes. Is it not so, Uncle Denis? You say of one set of men, ‘they are brave,’ of another ‘they are not brave.’ And if we ask why, we find it is because the first wear, and that the others do not, a certain sort of clothes. We would like to think courage was a common quality of men, and it is disconcerting to hear you speak as if it were exceptional, and depended on the profession a man is in. Why should not Mr. Brady like a campaign as well as Captain Desmond.

“My dear Mary,” interrupted Sir Denis, “you are on dangerous ground. Courage is about as evenly distributed among men as the power of reasoning is among women. But there are many kinds of courage. There is physical courage, of which there are various kinds—such as an active spirit of aggression against death, and opposition to danger for the sake of it, a contempt of peril, and a scorn for life itself. That is rare—I believe very rare. Fortunately it is so, for man's passions would render the world too horrible if it were otherwise. If one man determined to kill another, and took no heed to his own life, but parted with it willingly provided his object be gained, he could do what he wanted, and kill his man. No monarch would be safe from the conspirator's knife then. Every man would live at the mercy of his foe. There is again a physical courage, which is ostentatious—it is derived from what is without rather than what is within a man. The applause and admiration of other men, high animal spirits, the love of praise and desire of honour ; these will act so as to produce the greatest displays of heroism in warfare, and in other times of risk ; but a man who shall be brilliant in the field, *coram populo*, may fail in the dark, or be deficient in actual moral courage. Then again there is a passive physical courage, which is obstinate and non-aggressive, defensive but unshakable. This is raised to the highest degree of excellence when it is founded on a sense of duty and animated by intelligent devotion, and it may become eventually aggressive and positive. Above all these, perhaps, as a mere development of the power of the intellectual man, is the courage at the base of which is fear—the courage displayed by nervous, timid people, when, by sheer force of will, and by the compulsion of their nature, they compel the body and animal

instincts to obey the soul. That is a real conquest of matter by mind ; but I believe it to be more common than is supposed."

"I cannot fancy," Miss Fraser remarked, without raising her eyes, "how any one can be afraid to die. It must be more painful to live sometimes."

"So," replied Sir Denis, "thought some ancient philosophers, and so think the poor cowards who take their own lives now, Mab."

"But how can it be cowardice to take your own life?" interposed Miss Butler. "How can it be so cowardly to despise it, and throw it away, in one case, when it is such a fine thing to disregard it, as you say, uncle, in another? Mind, I am not saying it is right—I know it is not, and I only ask for Mab, now."

"Bad logic, my dear Mary! The coward flies from that which is the more terrible of two dangers. Running away from an assassin he will leap into a roaring torrent."

"But," said Mary, "if he were really careless of life, he would not run away at all."

"Ah! *there*," laughed Sir Denis, "you have me! I lower my lance, close my book, and drop my lecture on courage. And, indeed, I believe I went over all the various sorts of that quality or accident."

"Except Dutch, uncle," said Gerald. "Dutch and French—I don't know the difference."

"It is a courage with its uses. Dutch courage has won a fight or two in its day, and on our side, too, Gerald."

When we went into the drawing-room, Miss Fraser was sitting apart, gazing on the clouds tinted with the last rays of the setting sun as it dropped swiftly behind the distant hills, and Gerald drew a chair to the same window. Mary pointed to a place beside her on the sofa. Sir Denis resumed his study of a pile of newspapers.

"I am so glad, Terence, to have a few quiet moments for a chat with you," began Mary. "Why, we have not met for ages, and as yet we have not had half a dozen words together."

I murmured something, I don't know what—"delightful"—"agreeable"—"old times"—and felt very hot and red in the face.

"And you visited Lough-na-Carra again, with my uncle? Mrs. Considine was so distressed that she was too ill to get up and see you. He," she went on, nodding towards Gerald, "and I went over there to-day, with Rose Prendergast, who took her farewell of the poor invalid. She leaves almost immediately. A Mr. McTurk has bought the place at last, and Rose is coming here to

tea, as it will be nearly her last night in Kilmoyle. Poor Rose, so young, so friendless—the great sea and the great world before her!”

“Well, at least she has friends! and when she crosses the sea she will have her brother to welcome her.”

“She is very sad and anxious about him. Although she opens her heart to me she avoids speaking of him, but she has told me he is quite changed, even to her—he is turned mad with politics, and is possessed of a furious hate against England, and all of us, which makes her tremble for his reason. He was getting on famously at the bar in America, she says, and threw all his chances away to begin some agitation, and go making speeches all over the country. It is sad, and all the more because he is so sincere and honest. He has abandoned everything for his principles, and no one can give a better proof of his sincerity. Ah, here she is! Welcome, dear Rose.”

Miss Prendergast embraced Mary tenderly, dropped her stiff courtesy to Sir Denis, who, as her name was announced, advanced to the door and led her to a sofa, and she repeated the formal ceremony for Captain Desmond and myself. The greetings between her and Miss Fraser were as cold as those of two girls of such an age well could be. I fancied there was just a shadow of a shade of discontent on Mabel Fraser's brow, as Gerald remained before her chair, and united his efforts with those of Sir Denis to “make the pretty mute unlock her lips,” as he whispered to Mary, “I give it up; you are the only one who knows the ‘open sesame.’”

Rose was something more than pretty to-night, she was quite lovely, and the extreme plainness and neatness of her dress became her better than the finest robes. Sir Denis could scarcely conceal his admiration under the courtly politeness which had not deserted him in India, and, as Gerald still lingered near her, the gathering gloom and quick glances of Mabel's eyes revealed her dissatisfaction at the effect produced on the gallant captain of Bengal Tigers. It would have been difficult to find three such charming faces as might have been seen in the Castle drawing-room that summer evening. But how different was each in character and expression! Rose Prendergast's simplicity and gentleness were accompanied by an air of sadness and resignation. She rarely smiled, but when she did there was a radiance in the smile which startled one in its sudden contrast to the ordinary timid and mournful character of her face. Her manner was somewhat restrained, but at times there came a burst of impulsive warmth through the cover of her reserve, which showed the sun was behind the clouds after all.

She was sentimental, tender, meek, and pure—as guileless as a child, but of a firmness of purpose which could not be overset, and which she, with her brother, inherited from the “Iron de Lacys” on her mother’s side. As to Mabel Fraser, who could describe the infinite variety of expression which her features assumed—as the sea changes in colour with the clouds which sweep over it, is ruffled by the breeze and convulsed in the storm, or sinks to repose? Now and then she could control her face into perfect impassibility, and look out beyond, or through you, as if she were watching some one far away. Every action was graceful and full of some subtle charm, and there was a helpless, dependent, deprecating way about her—as if she were always mutely appealing to those around for protection—as if she wished the world to know she required all its forbearance to forgive her for being alive at all, that was quite touching.

Need I say that, beautiful as they were, neither could be compared with my peerless Mary? Never did a tender, courageous, truthful spirit look forth through a more fitting countenance. She had no artifice—no reserves—no disguises. Her soul was truthfulness, and the utter unfitness of her mind for understanding falsehood—not the mere falsehood of words, but of purpose and character—laid her open to the stratagems of others; and although her intelligence was quick enough, and her woman’s wit was fine and sparkling, she thought and acted with a directness which admitted of no turning or shiftiness, and marched straight towards its object, regardless of finesse or manœuvre.

In obedience to a sign from Mabel Fraser, I went over to her window when Miss Prendergast entered. It was nearly dark where she sat, but the servants brought in lights with the tea, and the lamp shone on her as she beckoned me with her jewelled hand—for she loved jewels—to come. She turned her face towards the park and looked out of the window, so that I could not catch her eye, but in a few minutes she had quite exhausted all I knew about Miss Prendergast, and she gave a sigh, as of relief, when I told her Rose was soon going to leave the country for ever. “She is very pretty, but very *gauche*, and, I should think, insipid.”

The opportunity that I had been longing for was about to pass away, for Mary called out, “I am sorry to disturb that gloomy little *tête-à-tête* in the window, but tea is ready, Mab. Send over Mr. Brady for your cup, or come over and join us.” Mabel was just rising.

“Don’t go for one minute,” I entreated; “I have a word to say to you—pray, Miss Fraser.”

She resumed her seat.

"Since I saw you that night I have not had a moment's peace. Explain what you meant; tell me what we have both to fear. For God's sake, do! Confide in me, and trust me, and all may be well. Is it anything about your father, or about his wife?"

"I don't understand you, Mr. Brady. I have nothing to confide to you—nothing to trust, and I am not aware you and I have any cause of fear in common."

"But you said so. You forget? When I was left alone with you for a few seconds that evening."

"I beg of you, Mr. Brady, to believe that I was so very ill, so excited and frightened by dreadful dreams, I do not know what I said. It makes me shudder to think of it even now——"

"Dreams!—dreams!"

"Yes; all dreams—nothing but dreams. I was worse than Richard III. I had a headache, and lay down to try and sleep it off. I must of course have been very much indisposed; but at all events I dreamt my window opened of its own accord, and that a man or a woman—I could not say which—came in like a cloud and advanced to the bed where I lay. I heard your name mentioned in my sleep, and the figure raised a crucifix and pressed it to my lips and bade me swear that I would never forgive you a mortal wrong you had done me. In my sleep I tried to feign sleep, I thought; but the figure woke me, and with a dagger at my heart made me take a fearful oath. I have endeavoured in vain to recollect it since; but I was some way to be aware you were to die, and I was to keep silence. How can I follow the caprices of a nightmare? Suddenly I found myself on the floor, struggling with the figure, which I thought was taking a box I had been told to guard, and I awoke. But the horrible influence of the dream lasted a long while. I actually don't remember seeing you at all that night. If you think it any use to ask me what I meant—Coming, my dear Mary!—Mr. Brady has been so very interesting!"

I had a dim perception that I was being misled by the fair dreamer, but I could not be sure of it. I did my best to be "interesting" to Miss Fraser and Mary Butler, whilst Sir Denis toiled through his rustling leaves, and broke from covert to covert through Posts and Sentinels, Watchmen, Guardians, and press functionaries of every degree of vigilance, caution, and discordant views concerning the real well-being of the property they sought to protect. Gerald applied himself with energy to cultivate the good graces of Rose Prendergast. By degrees he got her to speak of the *Sacré Cœur* at Angers, and listened with an

air of much interest to innocent anecdotes about Sister Agnes and Sister Marie, and the novice Charpentier, and Père Auguste and the schools. Sir Denis, who was a strong anti-Romanist—one of his best State papers was on the necessity of the Indian Government keeping up the native shrines and deotas—lifted up his eyebrows now and then to see what Captain Gerald was driving at. Mary was quite enchanted with the effect produced by her friend, and regarded Gerald's attention in the light of a personal compliment. Mabel Fraser was not paying any attention to them at all; she was engaged in looking far away, and her eyes saw nothing near at hand. Miss Prendergast was telling Captain Desmond the miracles wrought by Sœur Ursula, near Angers, which she had seen with her own eyes. The sister for many years had lain in one attitude, and had never eaten or drank except on her saint's day once a year. She was marked with the stigmata, and as you approached her room a smell as of violets, only more odorous and heavenly, stole forth; and some of Rose's friends had told her they felt their faces touched by angel's wings, and others that they had seen—yes, seen the angels, and heard the music of the golden harps on which they played.

"Oh! think of the bliss of that holy woman, Captain Desmond!" and the young enthusiast's face shone with a beautiful piety and fervour as she spoke; but, raising her eyes, and finding herself the centre of the little circle, her voice faltered; she coloured violently, and stopped.

The servant announced that her maid had arrived, and Mary carried off poor Rose, who was blushing like her namesake of the garden, to a private and particular confidence, from which they both returned with red eyes, blowing their noses violently some half-hour afterwards.

"It is very well circumstances interfered, Sir Denis, with Captain Desmond's conversion, or you would have had a recantation of his faith this evening," observed Miss Fraser, with more animation than she often displayed. "I was trembling for him all the while he was listening to Miss Prendergast."

"I am indeed flattered by your solicitude, Miss Fraser, but I beg of you to believe that my faith is firm. I like to hear the merits of all creeds from their professors, but I can still retain my attachment to my own. Don't think, because I stray into a bye-path I intend to abandon the main road for ever."

Rose Prendergast was about leaving when she took a letter from her reticule and handed it to me. "It is from Macarthy, the son of old Dan, who was at Lough-na-Carra as fisherman long ago. He knew I was coming here, and he begged me to bear it

to you, Mr. Brady—a petition, he said—and you are not to open it till to-night, and he laid great stress on my not giving it to you till I was leaving.” It was a dirty scrawl, closed with a wafer, and directed, “Mr. Terens Brady, doctor of British Fot Redgment in Kilmoyle.” I put it in my pocket without further examination. Rose took her leave, but Sir Denis extracted a promise from her to spend one whole day at the castle ere she quitted Ireland for ever. And at the thought she and Mary had a fresh overflow of tears, and walked sorrowfully down the hall together, locked in each other’s arms, and then went up and down the avenue like two disconsolate ghosts till Sir Denis despatched a servant with a ukase on the subject of night air and colds.

“I am beginning to believe in Gerald’s ghosts,” Mary laughed; “for as dear Rose and I were parting——”

“For the fourth time, to my knowledge——”

“No! uncle, the third and last, I assure you—the branches of a tree near me shook violently, and I heard a sigh or a groan distinctly, and thought I saw something.”

“We must get Cords to shoot that owl; we shall have no peace in the house till it’s done. Heh? what’s the matter, Mabel?”

Miss Fraser, with one hand on her heart, sprang up as he was speaking and exclaimed, “Mercy, Sir Denis! Mercy!” then stopped, made a violent effort to control herself, and, sinking back into Mary’s arms, gasped, “It is that dreadful dream. I beg you to excuse me—I am so weak—so foolish—so——”

“So ill, my dear Mabel, that I am very glad we are all going up to Dublin next week, for you must have the best medical opinion! And you looked so well at dinner. What a pulse, to be sure! We must really have you looked to at once. God bless you, my children. Good night. I shall go down to the Bastille, as Gerald calls it, and have a cheroot before we retire.”

Gerald and I repaired to the crypt where Sir Denis condemned us to smoke. A withered native servant, who acted as under-butler, and who put me in mind of Mohun, my old nurse—but he must be dead long ago—came in with a tray, and inquired as he was leaving, “Do Captain Sahib go out for walk to-night? If master not go, can lock up de dore, and keep dem darn dog quiet.”

The cause of Gerald’s unamiable mood in the day may have been a conversation with Sir Denis’s local man-of-law, from whom he learned the property was by no means as good as he expected—in fact, the pressure of old debts, of accumulations of interest, mortgages and new liabilities of rates in aid, poor-law rates and local taxation, was crushing. “Sir Denis has received, I’ve reason

to believe, thousands of pounds in gold from India, and instead of laying it out in redeeming some of the heaviest interests contracted by Sir Richard, he keeps it at the Castle till he sees a good property going, he says. He won't trust the banks, he says—for a man of business it's very curious."

So much Gerald, under the influence of a cigar and brandy and water, repeated to me ere Sir Denis came in ; but when he made an allusion to the topic, he encountered a stare so open-eyed, fixed, and angry from his uncle, that he dropped it at once. Sir Denis had been at a meeting of magistrates that morning, and took a very gloomy view of the state of the country. Disaffection was widespread—the very absence of ordinary violence, and the rare instances of crime, showed that the people were bending their minds to a great conspiracy. So reasoned the magistrates, who would have felt safer had an agent been shot at now and then, or had an old "agrarian" of the accustomed type turned up to reassure them. But, as they said, the country is so peaceful, the boys must be bent on some great devilment. Sir Denis was for strong measures, but the difficulty was to know what they were, how and to whom to apply them. He was a just man ; but he had little sympathy with those who were now around him. "The most ragged rajpoot (said he) has something of the gentleman in him. The lowest Hindoo has a sort of self-respect. But these people have all the faults, and none of the virtues, of the Hindoo or the Mussulman. Their civility is a cloak to hate, their courage the daring of the assassin." In fact, Sir Denis regarded the law as an instrument of punishment, not as a means of education, and he would have used it in all its rigour as a preventive as well as a cure. His influence strengthened the hands of those who thought that law-making should be left to Parliament, and that the duty of the people was implicit obedience. On the bench he took the lead ; he utterly overthrew and crushed the local attorneys. Mr. Fogarty whispered one day to his rival and friend, Mr. M'Manus, "Bedad, Dan, India must be as great a place for processes and summonses as Kilmoyle itself." He was, however, much as Charles V. among the monks. The ruler of provinces almost as large as the whole of the kingdom of which Kilmoyle was a fragment, was nothing more than an active and rather crotchety magistrate, and member of many boards. He through whose hands had passed revenues of millions, and on whose word depended the destinies of whole races, could do no more than hold his own respecting the levy of rates and the details of the parochial workhouse. There were difficulties he had never dreamt of even in the management of his own estate. Sir Denis

had no idea there could be any obstacle to the enforcement of rights, as long as he fulfilled his duties. And he was engaged in constant conflict and litigation because he and his tenants could not agree in the definition of the words. His nominal rental of £7,000 a year was represented by an actual income of less than £3,000, obtained by the constant exercise of legal duress ; and if he inquired into the mode in which an enormous burthen had been suddenly thrown on an estate already heavily loaded, he discovered that the money which he was obliged to repay had been laid out in making roads which led from nowhere, and ended as they begun, or in works of public utility which had taught the people the arts of pauperism, and had benefited neither individuals nor the state. But he was a strong man, and he set himself to work with that pleasure which such natures experience in any task requiring the highest exercise of their faculties. Only it spoiled his temper somewhat. He was vexed to see that he could not rub out the customs, prejudices, and the national peculiarities of a very ancient and very obstinate people ; and was fain to lament at times the unhappy disposition they had to take their own views of matters, and the unfortunate dispensation of geography by which they were placed under Parliamentary Government instead of the energetic system of Indian proconsulates. So he sat talking with Gerald, or rather to Gerald, until it was past eleven o'clock, and then we retired to our rooms.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

AS I was folding up my dress coat, I felt the letter which Rose Prendergast had handed me in the pocket, and took it out, half inclined to tear it up without opening it.

"It is," I ruminated, "some request for help I cannot give ;—well, let us see." The outer sheet contained another, on which my name and address were properly given. It was marked "Immediate." Scarcely had I read half-way, when I was flying down the passage to Sir Denis's room. He was half undressed, and was not a little astonished to see me as I was, and my pale ashy face. I did not tremble for myself. "Read that, sir ! Let us see to the women at once."

Sir Denis approached with the letter to the candle and read—
"I owe you much. I wish to repay you. Danger threatens one

whom we value. I cannot avert it, I fear, but I would cheerfully give my life to do so. I have reason to know an attempt will be made to-night on Kilmoyle Castle by a band of desperate men. No human being but yourself and those who are bound to me as I to them by solemn oaths know of my being here—not even my poor sister yet. I need not tell you to be discreet. If I were to communicate with the police, my life would be the forfeit—my liberty at all events, and to me both life and liberty are necessary for the sake of others. I thought I could have seen you to-day, but am disappointed, and I now send this to entreat you to meet me by Carra-bridge at ten o'clock to-night. You may not recognize me : when you hear a man say 'It's a fine night,' answer, 'The day will be finer ;' and you will meet one who can enable you to avert a terrible act of vengeance. Together we can do much. You must be at the Castle before eleven o'clock, as the attack will be made at midnight. Let your comrades who have gone to Old Court have a hint by some sure hand to see how they return. But for you and one other there would be a sure blow struck this night ; and God forgive my treachery to the cause. I sign myself only—YOUR FORMER FRIEND."

Sir Denis read to the end, and then, without the smallest trace of anxiety in his manner, and with rather more deliberation of speech than was his wont, inquired, "Are we to take this letter, which I suppose is privileged, as a serious communication on which immediate action is necessary? You know from whom it comes, I presume, or you would not come to me at such an hour?"

"I am sure I know who wrote it, surprised as I am. Not a moment is to be lost. We must prepare at once."

"It is now ten minutes to twelve o'clock," said Sir Denis, looking at his watch. "Short time to prepare, if that anonymous gentleman be exact. First, let me see all is right here. Do you go to my nephew's room and tell him I want to see him at once. Make no noise, avoid a scene with the women, and come back as soon as you can."

Sir Denis was examining a pair of double-barrelled pistols with evident astonishment and anger when I returned with Gerald. "There is mischief afoot," he said quietly. "Mr. Brady, be this alarm real or false, my pistols have been tampered with, and we must get ready. They did not calculate on a warning. See, the nipples are plugged!" He began to unscrew them, giving directions calmly all the while. "Go to Cords' room, Gerald; wake him, and tell him to bring up all the arms he can muster here. Then call Martin. Let him examine all the fastenings below at once, and arouse the men-servants quietly. I will look

after the natives in a moment or two. We are three, Cords four, Martin five, Petherick six, the servants in the house will make us twelve—why, we're an army! And the black fellows can load if we have to keep up a fire. I am only anxious for the poor girls."

"I will ride off at once to Kilmoyle, sir, turn out the police! give the alarm at the barracks!"

"No, you'll do nothing of the kind. If we are to be attacked at midnight—that is, in five or six minutes—you can do no good, and you would probably be potted on your way. We want every hand on the spot."

Cords, the head keeper, a sturdy Yorkshireman, followed by Martin, soon appeared in the wake of Gerald, who had a couple of double fowling-pieces under each arm. Martin, the butler, was provided with a blunderbuss and a single-barrel; and the keeper, in addition to powder-flasks and a bag of large shot, carried his own trusty and rather rusty fire-arm. Sir Denis's valet appeared with an old court-sword and a pistol; and one by one the men came in, till the room was alight with white faces. There were arms enough and to spare collected from all parts of the Castle; but on examining them, the lock of one was wood-bound, there was no flint in the blunderbuss, the ramrod of another was broken, and so on—still, there was a sufficient armament to provide us with weapons to meet an attack on any one spot. The only cause for anxiety lay in the number of ways by which the Castle could be entered. It was a straggling old house, with windows here and there looking out on court-yards and on the lawn and gardens, and there were half a dozen doors to be defended. The arms were loaded by Cords, Sir Denis, Gerald, and myself; and were distributed to the steadiest of the domestics, the others being armed with pokers, sticks, or whatever they fancied. A smart stable-boy volunteered to creep out of a window from which he could reach the garden, thence climb the wall, drop into the grove outside, and make his way to a farmer's, where he could obtain a pony and gallop into Kilmoyle to summon the constabulary. The dogs might be depended on to give notice of the approach of assailants, if they came at all. Gerald believed they would; for he thought they must have heard of Sir Denis's hoarded gold. Sir Denis himself was satisfied, by the tampering with his pistols, that some evil enterprise was possible. But if any one doubted—and certainly I was not one, although I hoped something might occur to prevent the outrage—there could be no room for incredulity, when we saw that the chain of the door of the passage leading from the smoking-room to the tiled walk outside was not on, and that the screws of the

lock and bolts had been loosed, so that a push would send it in. The old Hindostanee who had charge of the fastenings declared he had seen every door properly secured ere he retired. It was plain there was treachery inside, but whom to suspect?

Mary Butler and Mabel Fraser sat in Sir Denis's room, with Gerald on the watch outside. "Such a tremendous brick as cousin Mary is!" he exclaimed. "She is not half as flustered as some of the louts there with guns and pistols, and she is trying to make that poor miserable Mab believe there's no danger, just as a mother would encourage a shrinking child to face a hobgoblin."

The Hall was guarded by Sir Denis and one of the servants. Cords was on watch at the back; Martin patrolled the kitchen corridor; other armed men were put in the rooms on the level of the ground, where the windows might be forced from outside. I was on duty at the smoking-room postern, now secured by the chain and by the screwing home of the bolts and lock.

The clock in the court-yard struck the half-hour, and all was still as the grave outside. My ears were strained to catch the slightest noise, and the ticking of the kitchen-clock sounded along the passage as if it were close to my head. Minute after minute passed; not a stir. As I leant against the door in the dark, my very breathing seemed like a murmur of voices, and the beating of my heart like the slow tap of a drum. Would they come? Was it a false alarm? Had Maurice Prendergast at the last hour succeeded in thwarting the villainous design? Suddenly there ran a chill through my veins. Hish! There could be no illusion. They are here! The wooden step at the postern creaked. My ear was pressed close to the door, and I *felt* some one was outside! Then the handle was turned gently against my heart, as I crouched with my finger on the trigger of my pistol, the bolt grated slightly, clicked, and shot forward again. The door shook very gently. The whisper of voices was audible, as if of men beside me. Again the handle was tried. Again the door was pressed with an increasing strain! The touch of hands and the rubbing of men's shoulders came through the solid oak to my watchful sense, as though they were on *me*. By the side of the door were two small panes of glass. I could see the stars twinkling outside; the faint light stole in from the open, just showing the dimensions of the window. All at once the stars were shut out—an opaque body nearly blocked out one square of glass. The least movement of my hand would have placed the muzzle of my pistol with but a thin film between it and the ruffian's head. But Sir Denis's orders were positive—no one was to fire a shot for his life till the burglar actually stood before him, or was bursting through door or window.

The signal for help was to be a whistle if any place was threatened. I was just about to force my lips to make the sound when the stars gleamed again, the head vanished from the window, the boards creaked, and the whispering was renewed outside. Then all was silent. There was nothing stirring outside. The dogs were mute. Were the marauders disconcerted by the failure of the access on which they had depended, and would they abandon the attempt, fearing they had been betrayed, and that the accomplice's work, on which they relied, was discovered? I listened in an absolute agony of suspense. Should I give the signal? Would it not be better after all to show we were on the alert, and avert the attack? Sir Denis, however, had ordered otherwise. There was a grim determination on his part to surprise the assassins, and to make them rue their work; and he peremptorily rejected Gerald's idea of lighting up the Castle and ringing the large bell in the court-yard.

"They will but try again," he said; "and I intend that this attempt shall be their last."

I thought of running swiftly to the Hall for one instant and telling him what I had heard, but the fear that they would make a sudden rush at the door, and force it in a twinkling, whilst I was absent, deterred me. The clock tolled one! Not a sound. Again the seconds ticked on, and the minutes followed in slow procession.

I thought of the brave girl who was watching and waiting too. I would lay down life so cheerfully for a word from her—a hundred if I had them—for one little word from those dear lips. If it would save her a moment of that suspense, I would go forth into the night and brave unknown dangers and all odds of death. What is that? A low, soft whistle from a distant room! It is repeated more loudly, and re-echoed near at hand. Sir Denis appeared at the end of the passage, and beckoned to me.

"Cords has whistled twice! Come!"

"But they have been here too! They have only just gone."

"Then keep on your post."

And he disappeared, and left me in darkness. I returned to the door, with every faculty in such tension that each seemed to wander abroad and refuse obedience to my mind. Murmurs crept through the night air. There were voices singing in my ears. I heard my own name. It sounded—a woman's voice—close to my ear, "Terence, darling Terence! guard me and protect me." My fancy played me strange tricks, for I saw shapes in the darkness. There were figures and faces, and noises of rustling garments all around me, and lights sparkled out and vanished; my hands trembled so

that I was obliged to uncock the pistol I held, lest I should discharge it.

The whistle!—again!—again!—again! It came from several parts of the house at once—then the sharp crash of glass, and a report, as when a firearm is discharged from within a house, followed by several shots from outside! There was a tramp of feet along the halls and passages, shouts of “This way, all of you!” With an inexpressible sense of relief, bounding away like a dog from the leash at last, I flew towards the fray. There was one more shot fired as I rushed into the back corridor, and, by the light of a candle, borne by a terrified lad, I saw one of the servants bearing a man, whose legs trailed heavily in the passage, and whose head hung down over the servant’s arm. My soul sickened as I saw the grey hair.

“Oh, doctor! look to him. Poor Cords, sir! The bloody villains!”

We laid him in the passage; and, as I knelt beside him and tore open his coat, the blood purged out in heavy drops from his neck. He looked up in my face with a smile.

“I dropped two on ’em, for sure, Master! that I did—right and left; but they’ve done me, I doubt, haven’t they, sir?” There was a jagged hole when I wiped away the blood, just below his shoulder-blade, and the ball had passed out behind the neck. It had not lodged, but the wound was enough to kill, I thought. The boy brought me water, and I plugged up poor Cords’ wound as well as I could with a piece of linen.

“Don’t mind me, Master: let me be. Go off, all of you, to Sir Denis. There’s a lot of the infernal poaching vagabonds. But I’ve nicked two of ’em—right and left, that I did.”

He was carried to his room against his faint remonstrance—“Bring me back, and let me load, for sure I can load, and we’ll beat ’em, the murdering poachers!”

In another instant I was in the hall, at the back staircase: a light, screened from the door windows by a pillar, revealed the scene. Sir Denis stood behind one batten, with a pistol in each hand, Gerald, with levelled double-barrel, by his side, watching the broken batten against which a heavy table had been placed. Splinters of wood and glass lay on the floor; the door was pierced with bullets; Martin, below the table, kept his eye on the open space above—one of the men, behind the pillar, was loading a smoking gun—a boy with powder, flask, and ball was handing another.

“Stand clear of the opening, or you’re dead!” shouted Sir Denis.

And as I leaped aside towards him, flashes and smoke came through the door, and I felt one ball at least whish by me. My foot tripped, and I fell. There was a roar of exultation outside, through which I thought I heard a shrill cry ; but I was on my feet in a second. "Not hurt, Sir Denis."

"Do you want any more, gentlemen?" quoth Gerald. "You're not shooting so well this time. Say when you're quite ready, please."

"Why don't you stand out from behind the door, like men, and we'll show you if we can shoot or not?" answered a rough voice outside. "We'll make you warm, you black-hearted members, before we've done with you."

"There will be more of you very cold then, my excellent friends, if you try," replied Gerald. "We hope you'll begin again soon. I am getting rather sleepy."

There was a curse in reply, several shots were fired through the door, and sent splinters over us. No one came in sight of the dreaded opening, at which eight barrels were steadily levelled.

"The firing surely will alarm the people," whispered Gerald. "We must soon be relieved."

"Don't depend on one of the fellows on the estate, your honour," whispered Martin. "They never interfere on such occasions. They're afraid, and they're not willing either."

"I'd get rid of every man of them to-morrow, Uncle. Don't fire!—it's only a hat on the end of a stick. No good, my fine fellow. Put your head inside it, and try. It will be an easier death than a noose."

We waited and watched again. It was dreadful. There was not a sound. A quarter of an hour passed. Martin lifted his head above the table, and reconnoitred.

"The day is dawning, I'm thinking, Sir Denis," he whispered. "They're off, sir," suddenly he shouted.

"Let us out and pursue them!" cried Gerald. At that moment there came from upstairs a scream so full of terror and anguish that our very blood was still for an instant.

"It is the women! Martin and Tom, don't stir for your lives! Stay you there," shouted Sir Denis; and with incredible activity he leaped up the stairs, followed by Gerald and myself bearing the lighted candle.

As we entered the room, Mary Butler, statue-like, and erect, with her lips apart, was standing alone by the table, with her eyes fixed on the window. The shutters had been burst open: and as we rushed in, a man with a mask or blackened face was leaping into the room. Sir Denis dashed Mary aside, but as his

left hand raised his pistol, he was struck down by a heavy blow—he reeled into my arms—a triumphant yell escaped from the ruffian's lips—"Come on, boys! come on! I——" And he rolled in a death agony as the room was filled with armed men.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TO THE WAR.

I AWAKE from a painful sleep. The railway accident had just occurred, and I was bleeding, and faint, and hungry. Bishopsthorpe is the name of the place, I remember, and this must be Langley Station. I have escaped from Sweatenham. I was running off to London to seek my fortune, when that dreadful smash!—How my head is ringing and my eyes are aching!—What dreams I have had! But thank God they were dreams—nothing more!—Who are moving about me now? The little maid and the doctor? They only disturb me and interrupt my thoughts. It is better to sleep on if those dreams do not come again.

I close my eyes and glide away into the state which divides sleep from its fatal sister, from whose embrace there is no awakening. Through the trance I become aware that hands are busied about me, and that I am raised up tenderly. I feel the surgeon's finger on my brow. I try in vain to recollect when and where I was hurt. Surely I ran from Bishopsthorpe to Langley? And now—now am I dying? Is it impossible to shake off this load of drowsiness—to open my eyes and think? Is it all a dream, that murderous night—are the events which have passed in such long detail through the subtle alembic of the brain vaporous creations of my illness? The Temple and Standish—my escape from the robbers—the duel—the weary marches through Ireland—the return to Kilmoyle—Mabel Fraser—Mary Butler's friend—the Castle—the wild inferno of the crowning agony in which I saw Mary, brave and glorious as some battle goddess in the midst of carnage and horror—yes, all was a dream, thank Heaven! And I would wake up and set out for London, and there toil and work. * * * * * And so dozed away, remembering only that I had suffered fictitious misery, and dreaming that I had dreamt.

How long I lay I know not, but there was a light before my eyes, and a firm hand opened my unwilling lids, and the glare filled my head with pain. I heard a familiar voice: "He is getting

on famously—pupils contracting powerfully. I think Dr. Duke will be able to manage the dear lad without me now.” Then I caught such words as “kept very quiet—nourishment—must not speak,” and the speaker buzzed away in whispers, in which another joined. There was a door gently closed, and I suppose the doctor went away. In my confused dream, I fancied I was a pupil to a great surgeon in Dublin, and the voice just now was that of my master, as I had listened to it in imaginary lectures. It certainly was not the tone of Dr. Stock, of Langley.

I made an effort to turn, and the movement in the bed attracted the attention of some one in the room ; a soft hand was passed over my brow, and then I heard a low sigh, and the breathing of one bending close over me. After a time—how long I can't say—I opened my eyes. Was it night or morning ? There was a thick veil between me and the objects on which I sought to fix my attention. By a continued effort, at last I began to make out through the haze certain shapes and figures on the wall towards which my face was turned. Here is another proof of my wandering ! I fancy I trace resemblances to patterns on the paper of a well-known room from which I am hundreds of miles away. There is the yellow-and-red parrot clambering up the thin green spiral, loaded with gigantic purple apples, to catch another parrot who is doing the same, and so on ; parrots, spirals, and apples, till the last parrot passes halfway into the ceiling, and is lost in a border of black and red lozenges. Let me see—they could not have papered the room whilst I was asleep ? When I went to bed, the room, I remember well, had a plain grey paper. And now these parrots ? they were old friends of mine. Often and often had I gone to sleep staring at them, wondering if I ever should live to go to the land where the originals flourished in the flesh, and take a shot at them for the sake of the lovely plumage. They had for years, when I opened my eyes in the morning, greeted me with their great bead-like optics, which the designer had made to shine very brilliantly by a clever pip of white. I gazed now till my eyes ached, closed them, reasoned with myself as to the absurdity of my fancies, opened them—it was no use—there they were as before. It was the pattern on the paper in my bedroom at Lough-na-Carra ! Slowly I turned my eyes upwards. I beheld an empty picture-frame on the wall ! And then I shuddered, and prayed to God to spare the reason which I feared was about to leave me ; for in this conflict of memories I could not discern that which the senses revealed from the wanderings of my sickness. And as I muttered my prayers I groaned, and the same hand smoothed my hot brow once more, and I heard a voice

whisper—it fanned my ear, and slid gently as it were into my poor head—"Are you in pain now?"

"Oh yes, very great pain! Where am I, and who are you? Open the curtains, and let me see clearly."

"Dear sir, you must keep quiet! Compose yourself, and ask no questions. Sir Philip gave strict orders that you were not to be permitted to speak. If you ask questions, we are not to answer you. But now, as you are awake, it is time to give you your medicine."

"Sir Philip who?"

"I must answer no questions. Pray, sir, take this. I am your nurse. You must obey orders for the present. Do, and you will soon be yourself again. You are going on so well. May we be grateful to Him for his mercies! Thank you," said the nurse, as I swallowed unresistingly a spoonful of some fluid. "You will compose yourself, won't you?"

Now it is very easy to say, "you'll be good," but it is a very hard promise to keep, and it was more than I could do when it came to me as a plain matter of eyesight evidence that Rose Prendergast was bending over me; there could be no mistake on that point. Rose Prendergast's eyes were looking into mine, and the square edge of a ridiculous long flapper pendent from a stiff white cap which imprisoned the wild tresses of her dark hair, tickled my cheek, and one hand was still under my head and had raised it so as to enable me to swallow my potion.

"And in the name of mercy will you," exclaimed I, trying to rise, "tell me what all this is? Where am I?"

But she put her finger to her lips, shook her head, and vanished from the room. And I knew that I lay nigh to the doors of death in my little bedroom in Lough-na-Carra, and that what had passed was not a dream. How often the doctors are wrong! Had their directions been carried out in my case, I should have been hopelessly mad. Not to be told where Mary Butler was—not to know how *she* was? Why, I would get up that very instant and see for myself. And by an effort which exhausted all my little stock of strength, I was rising in my bed, when the door opened, and as I looked there came in softly—Mary Butler herself! I uttered a cry of joy, and said I know not what. Mary had one finger on her lip, and as she approached, she held up her little hand monitorially—"Now, Terence, I'm sure you'll mind *me*, won't you? It is most essential for you to keep perfectly quiet. Let it be enough to know we are all well. There, do not give way like that; see how weak you are."

Her hand was in mine. I had burst into tears—my old failing,

and could only ejaculate, "Thank Thee, oh God ! Oh, thank God !" as I pressed it to my lips. Mary Butler made no effort to withdraw it, but regarding me as a poor, sick, womanish lad, perhaps, sat by my side as I fell back fatigued, still clutching the treasure in my grasp. In low tones she told me how the police had arrived just as the robber band burst into the Castle and were engaged in a dreadful contest with the servants, headed by Gerald, and how Sir Denis had recovered, and was so anxious about me.

"And you see, Doctor Duke, how our patient is," she said, as that great Æsculapius of the Western kingdom entered, "although we have altered your prescription a little."

"And indeed, Miss Mary, no wonder !" Doctor Duke said, with his finger on my wrist. "Wouldn't the sight of you cure any of us, though it kills us too ? Oh, it's the truth I'm telling. There's a pulse ! Phew ! it's just in flood this minute ;—rocks, shoals, and pools—rattling along, and stopping, and sinking."

Did Mary understand the Doctor's railery ? I rather think, so direct was she, that she little guessed the secret. "I shall leave you with your patient, Doctor Duke. Miss Prendergast and the nurse are in the next room. Good-by, Terence ; I will come and see you to-morrow ;" and Mary went away.

"She's a Trojan, by Jupiter !" exclaimed Doctor Duke. "No wonder for your blood to be playing leap-frog inside there."

And he grinned knowingly, and I felt my right hand close with an earnest desire to leave the impress of the knuckles thereof on his very broad and very unintelligent countenance.

How I longed for the next day, and how I lived but for the daily visit ! I was patient and obedient to every one now.

My convalescence was rapid ; but, alas ; I was soon deprived of the physician who had worked such a miracle, as Doctor Duke declared my rapid rally to be. When Mary went away there was an interval in which I seemed to make no progress towards recovery. Sir Denis came with her to bid me good-bye ere they left for England, and I could not speak before him ; but she said when she was parting from me, "Get well soon, for all our sakes. You know how we all feel for you, Terence ;" and these words comforted me many a time after they had gone. And there was sad news to hear. My dear old guardian, Mr. Bates, who hastened over from the Continent the instant he heard of my condition, by degrees gave me the sequel to what I have told you. A great calamity had fallen on them. The Castle was in ruins ! Mabel Fraser had disappeared ! When the window-panes were broken in and the voices of men heard outside, she gave the wild cry that

thrilled us all and summoned us to the room, dashed from Mary's arms and fled.

One of the men on watch near the kitchen passage saw her flying downstairs; and "I crossed myself," he added, "with the cross of Christ, for the lady was like the dead frightened out of the grave." Search was made in every quarter, but she was nowhere to be found. The ruins were examined; there was no trace of her, but bones were found in a calcined heap, and—curious ornament for a midnight marauder—a gold seal with a stone, on which there could be made out a coat of arms partially destroyed by the fire. But presently the fear that she had perished in the conflagration was dispelled by facts which pointed to some forcible abduction. At all events, they afforded strong proof that she had escaped a dreadful death. On the branch of a shrub in a thicket outside the Castle one of the police espied a lock of hair, long and golden. It was Mabel Fraser's beyond all doubt. Examining the ground near at hand, they came on the tracks of two horses' hoofs, which were visible as far as the high road. These appeared as if the riders kept close together, and as if one were far heavier than the other. From the road they had suddenly turned into a field, and the marks could be followed as far as the river, where they were lost.

The sub-inspector of constabulary and his men, as they were hurrying towards the Castle, heard the tramp of horses near the wood. And some added that they caught a smothered cry in "a woman's voice;" but there was not a moment to lose, as the shots were ringing through the air, and the little garrison must be hard pressed.

Advertisements were put in all the papers. The next news was from Athlone, where the innkeeper had two fine horses standing at livery. They belonged to two gentlemen, he said, who came the morning Kilmoyle Castle was burnt—one on foot and the other on horseback—and with them a fair-haired young lady, wrapped all over in a horseman's cloak, whose eyes were very red, and who was on horseback too. It was supposed to be a runaway match. The gentlemen had breakfast, and bought some ready-made clothes, and astonished the dressmakers and millinery establishments of Athlone by paying whatever they were asked. One was a dark little gentleman, the other was a tall thin one, and spoke cross to the lady; and when they drove off, leaving their horses "to be kept till called for next week," and taking only a bag which they bought to put their clothes into, there was a good deal of excitement in the town on the subject. They posted to the nearest station, took the train for Dublin, and were traced as far

as Holyhead, where they became lost in the passengers of the mail train for "all over the world;" and the police could detect them no further, remarkable as they were. Miss Butler's grief was acute, but she kept her feelings under control most admirably. She nursed her uncle night and day, coming over to see me, and looking after Cords and the servants who had been wounded and burnt—"going about," Mrs. Considine declared, "just like an army of angels."

The scene in Sir Denis's room was terrible indeed! When the police entered, they were horrified to see the old baronet, his niece, and myself stretched dead, as they thought, beside the fallen leader of the band, of which another was dying beside the window. Sir Denis, however, had only been stunned; but as the villain who struck him down reeled from my fatal shot, he dealt me a tremendous blow with a loaded weapon, and I fell lifeless at Gerald's feet. Mary Butler threw herself between her uncle and the man I shot, and fainted when I fell. The servants hurrying from all parts of the Castle filled the room, and, led by Gerald, attacked the robbers with spirit. But on a signal from the outside, they suddenly fled, leaving in the room their leader's body, and a comrade mortally wounded. Gerald and his party sallied out in pursuit of the assassins before the police appeared, but they were speedily recalled by a terrible signal. The light which one of the servants remarked, and which we hailed as that of the dawn, suddenly strengthened and reddened. The Castle was in flames; not so much the work of accident as of design, so far as could be determined. Although the villains had not fired at Sir Denis, but directed their aim at the servants and at Gerald and myself, they had apparently little scruple as to burning us all alive. The old place was full of draughty corridors and passages, the fire gained an ascendancy which could not be overcome by such means as were at hand, and of Kilmoyle Castle, the ancient seat of the Desmonds, all that remained was a portion of a wing, the blackened walls, and the out-offices. Sir Denis and Miss Butler were taken to Kilmoyle Court, the residence of Mr. Casey, and I was carried off to Lough-na-Carra, where my bed-room was given up to me by Mrs. Considine.

Sir Denis, at first inclined to abandon Ireland for ever, finally made up his mind to rebuild the Castle on a smaller scale, but ere he raised a stone of it he declared that Miss Fraser must be found or her disappearance explained.

As to the great outrage itself, not only the county but the country and the United Kingdom were ringing with it. The Government issued a tremendous proclamation and offered a large

reward, and the provisions of an act for keeping order in a district which is utterly out of order were at once applied to Kilmoyle and the adjacent baronies. The attack was on a grand scale. It was planned and accompanied by circumstances showing more daring and skill than are usually found in the plots of mere agrarian offenders. The Castle dogs were poisoned—each was dead and stiff in its kennel. Then, again, when Major Bagshaw and all his Bengal Tigers were coming home in good humour from a fine dinner at the Right Honourable the Earl of Bellbrook's, their carriages were stopped by a body of men who sprung over the walls on both sides of the road so suddenly that the gallant gentlemen could not even open the doors. No violence was offered, and the fellows let Bagshaw mount one of the coach-horses and start for Kilmoyle. Their object was that the police should be summoned out of the way, and a long ride the Castle stable-boy had ere he came up with them.

“And where is Gerald now?”

“Don't you know? I forgot to tell you. Why, Gerald is with the regiment. There is great news, my boy. You must join headquarters at Cork! There's war with Russia! The Guards have gone to Malta. The Army Medical Department have written to say you must be invalided or join within ten days. There have been no end of certificates and Boards about you, and you none the wiser, or they either; but Dr. Duke thinks you'll be able to start in a week at farthest.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EASTWARD HO !

SUNSET at sea—a deep-blue sea—sailless and silent; for the wind has sunk to a sigh, and the ripple scarce laps the iron sides of the ship which is cleaving through the placid water. The sky is cloudless, save in the west, where long narrow belts like fiery swordblades bar the rays of the sun as it sets behind a distant mountain-top rising out of the ocean on the horizon.

“Soldiers! merrily march away! soldiers' glory
Lives in story;
His laurels are green when his hair is grey.
And it's oh for the life of a soldier!”

The men had been trained to sing together, the bandmaster had

picked out the best voices, and the effect of the chorus as it was taken up by the soldiers forward and rolled in a storm through the evening air, might have made an opera conductor envious. And to see the honest fellows, with staring intent eyes and open throats, carolling away, and to think there were among them such awful grumblers and some malingerers, and some who did not care much for glory or laurels, or for anything but an easy life and strong drinks—why it was to feel the power of song. They were going, good lads, in the highest spirits, to fight for the Sultan of Turkey, in the firm belief that his enemy, of whom they heard for the first time, one Nicholas, Czar and “Imperator” of all the Russias, would immediately retire when he learned the Bengal Tigers were coming. How many of those voices could have quavered out a note in a short twelve months from that time? How little any of us, from General Sir George down to that jolly little drummer whom I beheld in the front of the column, with blanched cheeks rat-ta-tatting away on the high road to the Alma Post Station, and again with his dull eyes staring right up to heaven, and his fair hair clotted with the blood of his death wound—Ah, well! he escaped much. Let me go on and declare that not one of the wisest knew a whit more than any of the most foolish of the tremendous ordeal of battle on which they were setting forth that day.

“That ’ere is Mount Hathos,” explains the second officer of the *Colchis* to Lieutenant-Colonel Bagshaw, who is leaning over the bulwark and thinking of Gazettes and of his secret grievances at the hands of his unknown persecutor;—“a rummy place, too! I’ve bin there and seen the monks—bless you! just like rabbits in a warren.”

“Oh! that’s Mount Athos, is it? Thank you, Mr. Dobbs; I’ll just mention the fact to the General.”

And Bagshaw, adjusting his stock, approached the after-part of the quarter-deck, where Lieutenant-General Sir George Brown was standing a little apart from his staff with a telescope under his arm, engaged in a minute inspection of the proceedings of the card in the binnacle. Sir George was a well set-up handsome old man, with a fine broad pair of shoulders, small waist, and slightly in-turned knees, whose carriage and bearing made him look younger than he really was. He wore a uniform cloth cap with a general’s gold-laced band, a blue frock coat with gilt buttons, velvet collar and cuffs and gold lace, and tight uniform trousers, with lace down the sides, strapped over patent leather boots, which indeed had been garnished with regulation gilt spurs till practical experience of the difficulty of evading entanglements with ropes and the

like had led to their temporary "leave of absence." It was a pleasant face—a fresh-coloured, clean-shaven face, with a small grey regulation whisker cut abruptly off at the proper line with the tip of the ear, and a smooth clear skin like a surface of enamel, blue eyes, which seemed piercing and keen, and yet had not much power of vision, and a well-cut resolute mouth and chin. He was much braver than his sword. That implement would and could run away if it were attached to a pair of legs disposed to give it such initial velocity. It would break probably—if Wilkinson or some such expert had not tested it in its first essay with a good piece of steel—or it might bend if needs were, for all I know. But I am quite sure Sir George would neither run away nor break nor bend. And yet to be at the head of an army he was no more fit than the three feet odd of tempered metal in a brass sheath which was lying in a neat oil-skin beside his cocked-hat-case in the cabin downstairs.

For he had never commanded in his life—he had served always—served a man of iron will who gave orders and took no counsel—who initiated everything and had no familiars—who inspired confidence and never gave it. And it is not in the life of man or in his nature to carry "Ich dien" for years on his crest and suddenly to assume the baton and say "I order." No platitude so great as that which declares the best way of learning to order is to be much ordered first. Sir George had been so drilled and so ordered—so besat upon and so bureaucrated that his sole idea of safety in the exercise of command was to hold fast to the regulations and to the warrants—his law and his prophets, and to let the waves pass him as they listed. He was like Béranger's old soldier—"Pour moi, j'ai servi le grand homme ;" and as the evidence of his service he had the consoling words of his master, the assurance of the regulations and of the warrants, and the approbation of his own conscience. On the present occasion he wore, in testimony of the faith that was in him, a patch of black court plaster, about three and a half inches long by half an inch broad from the angle of his jaw upwards ; for it happened at 7.30 A.M. yesterday that the sea was vexed by winds, and the razor of the excellent general, undeterred by any consideration for the result, had conspired with his legs and with the good ship *Colchis* to inflict on him a gash which needed such surgical appliance. Sir George was surrounded by his staff, as the sun is waited on by his satellites. They were just the planets which could revolve, and do not much more. But they would, one and each and all, die in revolving if it were necessary. There was Colonel Mulligan—a dear, bland, charming old Horse Guards creature, more Hibernian in name than in

nature—who was going forth to war very much in the same way that he would go to a large evening party, and who would look on a battle as he would on a rubber in a side room—quite an accidental pleasure, in which he might win or lose, but could not get much on the wrong side anyhow. There was a great, fine, vigorous, young Briton—a man and a soldier every inch of him—Hailwell—full of zeal, animal spirits, appetite, and courage—unversed, of course, in war, and much persuaded it was like a pic-nic—in which you were to take the enemy's tree and camping ground by a rapid advance direct. There was another jolly young Briton and gallant soldier, Appleson—the General's aide-de-camp, and nephew—(it was a great time for nephews, they were on "Uncle's staff" everywhere)—who would have been a capital aide-de-camp to any one. And there was Tippleson and little McFatty, not forgetting my own chief, as I regarded him, best of soldier doctors, greatest of military medicine men, the simple, crafty, sturdy MacPhillip—big of heart and large of limb, honest and bold, but full of ambition and of settled purpose. They were seated or standing round their chief, who was swaying to and fro on the deck near the binnacle, as far from the chorus and the singers as he could well be, and rather doubting in his mind "if the Duke would have liked it." But the Countess of Hayrake was there—one innovation; and there were rifles on board—another innovation; and there were percussion caps—another innovation; and there was a newspaper correspondent—a Revolution! And so he did not know what to make of it all. Yes, indeed—Lord Hayrake, a captain in a regiment of which we had a detachment on board—a peer with God knows how many quarterings, whose ancestors had held their own against Bruces and Douglasses and Grahams, and who had the sole right of bearing a bowl of hip-pocras to the Queen on her wedding night, as Hereditary Hip-pocraster of Scotland—had by his side his fair and brave young wife, who knew as little of what was coming as Lord Aberdeen, or the Emperor Nicholas, or Sir George himself. Mrs. Malony, my servant's wife, assured me that "all the women ov the redgment would fight like divils if the countess would lade them, and they'd all die for her, the darlin', that minit, saysick as they wor." Well, the women would not have had the crown of martyrdom all to themselves in such a cause.

"I beg your pardon, General," said Bagshaw: "but that is Mount Athos we see over there."

Now Sir George did not like Bagshaw; he thought he had got on too fast in the service, and he had conceived an erroneous idea that Bag. privately cultivated the use of tobacco. Besides, Sir

George could not see Athos ; and if he had seen it, he would not have cared, for Athos was to him just as much as the violet in the grass plot by the fountain's brim was to the person who thought it was what it was. Besides, Bagshaw's coming to him in that way was a sort of assumption that he, Sir George, did not know Athos was in sight long ago.

"Well, Colonel Bagshaw ! Supposing it is ; what is that," said Sir George, "what is that to *you* ?"

Now, if the General had asked Bagshaw, "What is that to me?" B. might have got out of it. But to be asked what was Mount Athos to *him*, was a terrible blow. He could not honestly say that Mount Athos was anything to him (particularly as he did not know much about it, and the sun had by this time sunk behind it). He could not aver he was anything to Mount Athos ; and he was besides met by an hypothesis that it might not be Mount Athos at all ; so he felt he was in a wrong position without seeing how he was to get out of it, and that he was snubbed before the young men besides ; but Bagshaw was a brave man ; and as there was a pause in the new chorus of—"We'll tame the Roosian bear, and we'll make ould Nic'las stare"—he settled his chin in his stock again, and replied—"I beg your pardon, Sir George. But it's a very strong place—Xerxes, you know, and Alexander. It's on our left flank—deuced ticklish if the enemy moved down on it."

"No use ! plunging fire !" muttered our old Engineer Colonel, as if to reassure his chief. "The Russian engineers are not very strong. They never threw up works to oppose the French."

Bagshaw withdrew under a fresh outburst of "We'll tame the Roosian bear, and we'll make ould Nic'las stare"—and made up his mind then and there never to impart any species of information, moral, religious, physical, military, or political, to his Divisional General, and went down to read "Maunder's Geographical Dictionary," and to await his game of chess with MacPhillip.

"I wonder how Sir George can be so savage," observed Standish to me, as we stood by the bulwark ; "he is such a kind-hearted old fellow. When he was between decks yesterday, through my window I saw him talk to one of the men's wives, who was crying over the sick child you had left. He gave her a tip, and he passed the cabin with his eyes full, and his lips working as if he could have joined her, poor soul."

For Standish was on board. He had come armed with authority to take a passage as we embarked at Malta ; and glad was I indeed to see his face, sad as it was, once more.

"You see, my dear fellow," he said, "I could not help it. My newspaper went smash, and with it all my little fortune—all the scrapings off the bottom of Pandora's box. The editor of the *Hercules* got leave from Lord Hardinge to send me out to Malta, and then to come on, and the brave little woman at home and the two bairns must be left—as many a wife and child are left—for their own sakes. But I've promised not to stay more than a few weeks. The war won't last long. If it does I shall be starved, for I am assured I can get no food; and Sir George was good enough to tell me the only man to look after me would be the Provost Marshal."

And so we chatted together till the night was wasted, and the sun was heralded by a faint glow which lighted up on our right the faint outlines of the Troad, and we went to sleep as the British bugles woke the echoes on the shores which had once echoed to the battle-clang of the Homeric hosts, and had seen the valorous deeds of Diomed, the courageous constancy of poor Hector, and the exulting insolence of the Hellenes. Oh! would that the Trojans had driven them howling to the ships, and to the sea! We might have been saved a "question d'Orient," a Greek kingdom, a Crimean war.

CHAPTER XXV.

GALLIPOLI—OUR LANDING.

ONCE more our bugles sounded. This time at nightfall, waking up the echoes of the Dardanelles, and startling the Turkish sentries dozing beside their great guns in the ancient forts and rousing them into puzzled inactivity. The thumping of the engine and the thudding of the screw have ceased, and the anchor has splashed into the water, and the cable has rattled down after it through smoking hawseholes. Boats alongside—ladders down—the troops drawn up on deck—Sir George in spurs once more—the staff radiant around him. Away to shore boat after boat; then land on the beach or decaying jetties of Gallipoli, from the highest minaret of which floats a tricolour. The town is already French. The Turks in baggy breeches like huge knickerbockers, with dirty turbans, sit cross-legged on the benches in front of the dingy sheds by the water-side. They evidently don't understand it. The Greeks in baggier breeches, like petticoats with a seam between the legs, stand at the corners of the streets in dirty skull

caps, and evidently understand just as much as the Turks. There is a "Commandant du Port" (his "bureau" is the only decent cabin on the beach), who thinks Sir George and staff and troops are allowed to land merely in consequence of the goodness of the Emperor. And there is "Colonel Commandant de Gallipoli" who looks at us out of his telescope from the window of the best house on the quay with an air of considerable surprise as the men under old Bag. and Tony Potts, the adjutant, form up in column, and after muster march away up the strand with the band playing "The girls we've left behind us." The said "girls," headed by Mrs. Malony, are already engaged in mercantile transactions with the native traders, and seem to be getting the best of the deal, but their lords and masters are not so fortunate.

"There's not a blanket! nor a tent! nor an ounce of medical stores!" exclaims MacPhillip in great wrath. "No quarters for the men—no commissariat! And Sir George says it can't be helped, and that the Consul must look after it. It's too bad. There are more than thirty sick on my list, and no quarters for them, nor an idea of one."

Meantime the column was trudging away merrily through streets which looked very like the courses made by wintry rains, the houses being mere banks of baked clay pierced with latticed holes, now and then lighted up by gleaming eyes. We were bound for Bulair, a long march away, where we were to cut a great trench to prevent the Russians, who were up on the Danube, making a skip over the Balkans, skirting Constantinople, and popping down on the Dardanelles to command the passage, and so checkmate the allies. Bagshaw, freed from Sir George, with a Deputy-Commissary-General, a Deputy-Inspector-General of Hospitals, a Captain of Engineers, and two subs and an acting aide-de-camp all to himself, was magnificent and tremendous as temporary Brigadier, and conducted his march with all proper precaution.

"They shan't catch us, Wilmot," he growled, "as the Poldoodies caught us under Grimshaw in the Catterwally Pass. No, by Jove! You remember who saved us then? And to this day, sir, owing to some secret influence, I've never had the Poldoody medal. It's a confounded shame!"

All this while the Tigers were advancing on Bulair, with skirmishers in front, columns in deploying distance, Bagshaw and "staff" between the leading company and skirmishers. A wind-mill which rose on the undulating horizon was reported by the advance to be occupied, and the halt was sounded whilst Bag. sent on to the skirmishers to advance carefully.

"In war we can't be too cautious. How do *we* know who are or who may be in that windmill, eh!"

"They're little men in blue coats and red breeches, Colonel," quoth Wilmot, looking through a gigantic deer-stalker. "One of them is smoking; I can see him quite plain. They must be French."

"Must be, sir!—why must be? Do you think the Russians are not up to tricks? Send to Captain Nash to halt the skirmishers and load. He will advance steadily, reserving his fire till he receives fresh orders."

These belligerent dispositions were frustrated by an advance of a few yards more, which enabled us to look down into the little valley at the base of the windmill. A French regiment was encamped by a stream, on the sides of which their little tents were pitched, and from below came the clatter of voices, the refrain of song, and many a spiracle of smoke from the cooking-fires. Bagshaw had just time to call in Nash's skirmishers, as they crowned the ridge. As we passed the rivulet and skirted the camp of the 4th Infantry of the Line, the band struck up "*Partant pour la Syrie*." They came to the side of the path, looking at us with a curiosity quite equal to our own, whilst the drums rolled and ruffled their salute to our colours, and the guard over the eagle at the Colonel's tent turned out and presented arms.

"*Vivent les Anglais!*" cried the red-breeched dapper crowd; "*Vive rosbif! Vive la vieille Angleterre!*"

"*Bono Francis! Bono!*" grunted the Bengal Tigers, who had learned French in Malta, in one lesson.

Down from the windmill advanced a big Gaul, with several stripes of gold lace on his kepi, and as many to match on the sleeve of his frock-coat. He was followed by a few of his officers, who had been reconnoitring us, and seemed mightily amused. It so happened that at this moment Bagshaw halted to watch the rear company and to keep his eye on stragglers, and that Deputy Commissary-General McPhin was riding after the band. McPhin looked every inch a brigadier-general. He had a gold band to his cap, he had velvet collar and cuffs to his coat, he had gold twist on his shoulders; he wore a tremendous sabre; no broader gold stripe ever decked pantaloons, nor bigger spur ever decorated knight's heel; and over and above all that and these, the good gentleman—and he was good and brave as any Philistine of them—bore on his ample breast the Ashantee medal with two bars, the Caffre medal, the Gold-Coast cross, the Lagos star, the China medal, the order of St. Lazarus of Chili (where he had given a

large contract once on a time), and St. Didymus, in diamonds, and was portly and imposing to look upon.

"Permettez-moi, Monsieur le Général," began the Frenchman, courteously saluting; "de vous prier——"

"Bono François!—bono!" interrupted McPhin, with a wave of his hand. "Allons, allons!"

"J'ai l'honneur, Monsieur le Général," continued the Frenchman, somewhat disconcerted.

"Oui, oui! Commissary-Général," ejaculated McPhin, "vous savez. Pas Général de tout."

"Mais de ce brigade au moins, n'est ce pas, Général?" continued the Frenchman, "je suis le Colonel de Tranche Longueville, du 4ème régiment, à vos ordres. Auriez-vous la bonté, Monsieur le Général, de vous donner le peine——?"

Fortunately Bagshaw and staff came up at this moment, and Wilmot, who was a capital Frenchman, made all straight, and McPhin was relegated to obscurity. There was a halt, and a "Vin d'honneur" at the windmill, and we marched off again, after Colonel de Tranche Longueville had given full expression to his convictions that there would be great difficulty in working in the field, if we insisted in giving our commissariat officers galons d'or on their caps, and making them look like generals. "It comes, I suppose," he added, "from the importance you others attach to your eating," nibbling, as he spoke, at a souvenir of Toulon, in the shape of a stick of chocolate, "but it is sufficient to distract."

We made our adieux just as the men on both sides were beginning to fraternize; and, as the Tigers resumed their march, the general opinion was rather in favour of the 4th of the Line. "They're nate pleasant fellows, as far as I could make out their langedge, Bill; but I wonder why they wear them red trousers?"

"For the same reason we wear red coats, I suppose. They're like ourselves turned upside down."

"Boys! did ye see the officer in petticoats—an elegant lady in uniform," asked another, "with the little kag of spirits?"

"Oh! troth and I did, and got a drop from her too. Six petticoats she had on. She's a good iday of taking care of herself, though she was liberal, I won't deny."

With renewed "Vivent les Anglais!" and "Bono François!" we were off once more, and in an hour or so, from the fold of an undulating field, there came in view a small curve, in which the blue sea had embayed itself, chafing against the rocks in a white surf. The sun was sinking downwards towards a bank of clouds,

which hid the opposite coast from view, and there was a warm heavy wind springing which set the old fellows looking upwards.

"Rain before night, I'm thinking," observed Bagshaw to Potts, "and no tents, nor, I may add," he continued, "any particular shelter to speak of."

The Colonel was quite right on all points ; there was rain, there were no tents, and there was no shelter. Such rain ! It was a river turned through a sieve of clouds ; and there were the Tigers, very much cowed by it, without fire enough to keep a pipe alight, and soaking great coats all in rows, like furrows in a field, whilst Captain Tangent, of the Royal Engineers, and his devoted sappers taped and traced out the works which were to render the isthmus Russian proof. There were no supplies. McPhin's carts had not come up. But man sometimes lives on Hope, which has a light refreshing cuisine of her own. The storm abated after a little, when it had made every one as wet as he could be, and then we had time to express our opinion that it was "a confounded shame," to inveigh against Deputy-Assistant-Commissary-General McPhin, and to pity ourselves thoroughly, before we sank to rest, somewhat vexed of centipedes, which the rain had driven out of their lurking places. And so we reposed till morning, with the "all's well" of our sentries, and the bayings of the dogs belonging to a distant village in our ears. An instalment of tents for the regimental staff arrived in the early morning, soon followed by the baggage of the regiment. Six sheep, and a scraggy ox, with tremendous horns, whose agricultural labours ought to have spared him from such a fate as was in store for him, came up under escort to McPhin, accompanied by sacks of flour, and simple necessities of that sort ; and when Bagshaw returned from a clever reconnaissance, with two companies, in which he picked up a good deal of mud and not the least information, he was quite pleased with our prospects. "Here you are, Brady ; there is no rest for the doctor," said Tony Potts, handing me an official "O.H.M. Service," with "P.M.O." in the corner. It was, in fact, an order from MacPhillip, to report myself at once to him, in Gallipoli, when Surgeon Squills, who was on his way up, had arrived to take charge of the regiment. "Lucky fellow ! to get out of this charming place so soon." Sickness had broken out already among the men quartered in the town.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

STANDISH'S ADVENTURE.

THAT evening I was riding down the squalid, narrow, tortuous lane, bordered by tenements of wood and clay, with latticed windows, which formed the main street of Gallipoli. All the doors were fastened up, and the windows closed. Chalk marks here and there indicated the quarters of officers. No inhabitants were visible, but as my pony went neighing down the dusty path, I could see eyes peering through the lattices. I was bound for the quarters of my "P.M.O.," but there was no one to ask. If there were, what language was I to adopt? Malony, who followed with my traps and medical equipment, was not a very learned person either. As I was looking about, riding still on, and twisting and turning, my name was called—

"Brady! My dear Terence, where the deuce are you going?"

I looked up, and there was Standish at a window—the drawing-room floor—just within reach of my hand.

"Get off for a minute, and come in and see me. Kick at the door while I shout, and mother Papadoulos will let you in. I can't come, for reasons I will explain."

I knocked and kicked, and Standish shouted, and there was presently an undoing of bolts, and much speech in the harshest of all languages—modern Greek—and the door was at last opened by a trembling old woman, in a short jacket and breeches, and yellow slippers, with plaited hair adorned with some scanty coins, to whose skirts hung two children, bright-eyed and long-haired. I entered a dark vault-like place—the parlour—filled with large earthen jars, which put me in mind of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and with some miserable articles of furniture just visible by the light of a little oil lamp burning before a picture of a saint against the wall. There was a donkey in one corner, and I heard the grunting of a pig from the other, and a clucking and quacking attracted the attention of Mr. Malony, who put in his head and asked with much emphasis, "Haven't we a right to take any poultry we like, sir? Oh, begorra, that's a nate slip of a pig as ever I saw."

Mother Papadoulos escorted me to the foot of a very creaky and ladder-like staircase, which rose to the ceiling, direct up to a trap-door. I ascended, and as I got to the level of the floor above, my eyes glanced round the apartment in which Standish was waiting to receive me.

The room was about fifteen feet square ; the walls of clay, the planks in the floor wide apart, the clay ceiling discoloured by rain, and the latticed windows without glass. At one end was a sort of platform, raised a few inches from the ground, on which there was spread a piece of old carpet and a great coat. This was the "divan." A revolver hung on a nail in the wall. A deal box was in one corner, a saddle in another. There was no chair, no table ; and as I entered Standish rose from a portmanteau on which he was sitting. He was dressed in a shooting-jacket, long boots, and a flannel shirt which hung over them like a kilt ; his face was unshaven and his moustaches were in early stubble.

We interchanged greetings, and I had a hearty laugh at his appearance.

"Yes, indeed," he said. "Laugh and stare, my lad. You may well stare. Here I am, with all the 'horrors of war' on me—pillaged, sacked, and ravaged. I will tell you all about it. To begin with. After I saw you off, I made an attempt to procure quarters, but the French, who were here before us, secured nearly every house in town. I could get nothing to eat, and my baggage was not landed, so I went back to the *Colchis*, had a good dinner, and was fast asleep when, early next morning, I was awakened by the captain to say they had signalled to him from shore to start back at once for Malta. It was blowing like fury right down the Dardanelles. No one would fancy such a sea could get up in so short a time. We were as far from the shore as the captain could well put his ship, as is the fashion of all captains, and the skipper explained to me that if he sent off a boat to shore against such a current and breeze he would have to wait, and would get into a row. 'I can put you on board that brig close at hand,' says he, 'and you can easily get a boat from them.' So away I went, with my portmanteaux and a case or two of provisions from the ship stowed in the gig, and short as the distance was it tried oars and arms, and we took in as much spray and water as was good for us. The brig, which was light, strained at her anchor, and rose and pitched, I can tell you ; the mate ran the gig under her counter, and we looked out for a rope, hailing like men, but all in vain. So we pulled up towards the bow, and there we saw a rope dangling over the side. I laid hold and was scrambling up, when it was, I believe, let go by some one on deck, and down I came with a run ; and it was a mercy I didn't go plump into the sea between the vessel and the boat, but I was just caught by the sailors, who laid hold of the rope and hauled on it till it came taut. You see I've picked up some fine words anyway on board ship. Up I went again, and this time got right on

the bulwarks and dropped on the deck. One of the sailors came up after me, to get up my things. Not a soul to be seen on board. I felt uneasy at the thought of being left alone, but they were hauling up my goods and chattels as fast as they could, and before I could decide on what was to be done the sailor joined his comrades, and the boat was flying back with stream and wind towards the *Colchis*, whose screw was already working, as her cable came in, bringing up the anchor. I looked round and shouted. There were my boxes and my worldly goods and myself—nothing else. I made my way aft towards the companion, pushed back the hatch, and was about going down with an ‘Any one below there?’ when my arm was grasped in a strong grip, and looking round I saw as ugly a looking scoundrel as ever I beheld, staring at me from under his bushy eyebrows out of his villain eyes, as though he would frighten me; he was a short, squat, square-built chap, with a red nightcap, rings in his ears, a scarlet shirt, trousers rolled up to the knees, bare legs and feet, and he had an enormous knife in a belt round his waist. I shook off his grasp and put my hand towards my belt, in which, under my pea jacket, I carried my Colt, and said in French, ‘I want to speak to the captain. I require a boat to put me ashore, and will pay well for it.’

“‘Sono Greco! non so Francese.’

“I mustered up all my Maltese Italian to explain what I wanted, but the fellow did not understand me. As I attempted to go down the companion he seized my arm once more, and made a signal with his disengaged hand which brought four of his comrades from Lord knows where to his side—a more frightful, ill-favoured set of dogs you couldn’t find out of the galleys—armed to the teeth, haggard, hungry-looking, and desperate.

“‘I want to speak to your captain,’ I exclaimed, ‘and I will do so,’ and with a violent and sudden effort I shook off the grip of the fellow who held me. The vessel gave a pitch at that moment, and the next I was rolling down the companion, and came bang against the legs of a man who was tumbling out of a berth in a very dingy caboose, barely lighted by a little swing lamp. I suppose he thought he was boarded by pirates, or Lord knows what, for ere I could rise he had placed a very cold, hard circular tube end-on to my eyebrow. In a mixture of French and Italian I was trying to explain who I was and what I wanted, when the fellow broke out in English, something like your own, my dear Terry—

“‘You come on board my ship without my leave, and you ask me for a boat, and you think I will risk my men’s lives for your filthy gold. Begone with you! In ten minutes I’m away to

Scio—Syra—God knows where ; and you may get out of the ship as you came. Begone, I say.'

"I was utterly perplexed. The fellow was a resolute-looking young man, rather handsome ; though he had a scarred face and an ugly expression. His look was full of fury.

" 'I am at your disposal, sir,' I said. 'It never entered my head that I was doing anything to excite such anger when the captain of the *Colchis* proposed my boarding you for a boat, and we hailed repeatedly.'

" 'Yes ! oh yes ! of course,' he exclaimed with a bitter sneer. 'You English are lords of the world. You go where you like, do what you like, enter men's ships or castles or lands, rob, plunder, and appropriate, and all the world is to be at your beck and call. Why am I here ?' he shrieked—' why am I here now ? Because your cursed race have ruined me ! I was loading a cargo at Odessa when your admiral, or whoever he is, issues his ukase—he pronounces his dictum—there is a blockade established in the name of civilization and Turkey. Great God ! You come to fight for the Turks. I had to run, leave my cargo for which I had paid—paid my all—and come away with the miserable crew who are beggared, and now you, one of you, dare to come on board my ship and ask for a boat ! D—n ! If my ship had not cleared out of the Bosphorus yesterday, and if she is not out of the Dardanelles to-morrow, you might make a transport for British troops of me. Up on deck—out of my sight—or you are a dead man !' The fellow's rage was perfectly demoniac. At one time the idea of shooting him as a dreadful alternative to being shot flashed across my mind. Certainly it would have precipitated matters, but it was as well I did not try, as my pistol had been stolen out of my belt. I felt helpless. Perhaps my mute gesture of resignation touched the fellow. 'You need fear nothing from me,' he continued. 'But expect nothing. You may get from my deck as you came to it. In ten minutes we are off. You'll find yourself in queer company, and engaged in odd work if you stay, I promise you. And now, sir, once more, out of my sight, or it may be worse for you.'

"As I gained the deck, the crew were busy round my baggage. My bottles were making them merry, as they made free with them, and my portmanteaux and boxes were opened and rifled. There was an anxious glance to ascertain if the captain was following me, and when they saw I was alone, they resumed their work. I was angry and rash. I dashed in among them shouting 'Thieves, leave my things alone !' and dealt shrewd blows for England, brandy, preserved provisions, and my kit ; but the odds were

against me. I was pinned by the legs, and thrown against the bulwark by the gang, and the first villain I had seen, seizing me by the throat, aimed a blow at my breast with his knife. I declare I thought in an instant of all manner of things connected with wife and children, and all that sort of matter, and saw the paragraph about myself in print, but the brig gave a lurch, and the blade quivered in the bulwark, cutting the skin of my arm. In another second the thrust would have been repeated no doubt, but the captain rushed among them, and, with blows of his fists and kicks and shouts, arrested the scoundrels. He abused them roundly I can tell you, but the drink had made them sullen. 'I have told them that they shall do you no harm on board. Make a bargain with them for a boat. I will not order them to risk their lives. Look quick about it. What is done can't be undone, but you may ransom your clothes. You are an Englishman, and you are sure to have gold.' Addressing a few words to the sulky brutes, among whom there was only one man who was not cut-throat all over, he went aft once more.

"'Eh ben, Signor! quanto darette per un' barca?' asked the mate. I offered a napoleon: the dogs laughed outright. They sniffed round me as they haggled in all sorts of languages, and I foolishly, perhaps, raised my offer to five napoleons. 'Offer us one hundred and see what we'll say. It's a devil of a time! Great sea—bad boat—long row!' Just as we were bargaining, in mortal fear on my part, a schooner, with French colours flying, came sweeping down towards us gathering in her canvas, and in a minute or two let go her anchor and brought to between us and Gallipoli, about a quarter of a mile or more away. The sight encouraged me; I knew not why.

"'Come,' I said, 'this is my last offer. I will give you five napoleons to row me to that schooner. I will make no complaint against you for your theft, but more I will not give; and if you detain me you shall rue it all your lives.'

"'Pay us now, then,' said the mate.

"I carried my gold in a canvas bag attached to a belt close to my body. I had about eighty napoleons; and as I drew forth the bag, the sight and chink of the coin were too much for the rascals. The mate made a snatch at the bag, but I was too quick for him, and making a dash past them I leaped upon the forecastle and ran to the bowsprit, on which I got out as far as I could hold myself, exclaiming, 'Never, villains! I die sooner.' I put my arm round a stay and waved my pocket-handkerchief. It flew out in the breeze, and the salt spray plashed into my teeth and eyes. I held on, still with an eye on the savages, who were

muttering under the lee of the fore-castle and planning to circumvent me. But they were soon set to other work. The captain appeared again on deck. Without deigning to take notice of me, he gave orders to his crew, and the fellows, joined by a couple of hands who were roused up from below, began to heave on the windlass, and as the strain of the cable told on the bows, higher and higher flew the spray over and about me as I held on to my slippery friend. There was no sign of life in the schooner, no recognition of my frantic signals. But Providence was so ordering things that, without saying Heaven at that moment sent a man-of-war up the Dardanelles specially to save me, I was saved. From what I know not! Right in the teeth of wind and stream came, in its immense grandeur and strength, a British two-decker. My boy! I tell you I nearly let go my hold as she came, from under the cover of the high land near us, and bore right down for us with the old flag at her peak. But alas, she might anchor! or steam away over to Gallipoli instead of keeping her course! The old hawser of our anchor had a tight strain on it and taxed the strength of the rascals, but still it was coming in at every turn; yet faster still came on the screw line-of-battle ship, and I held my breath in agony, with my face turned over my shoulder, and leaning as far as I could over the side that my signal might be seen. The captain and the crew saw her not. They were busy at their work. But at last the captain caught my eager gaze; he looked too. By Jove, if he didn't jump and swear. There, within twenty yards or less of him, was the figurehead of the *Hannibal*!—Bless the man who carved the ancient Carthaginian in his full Roman uniform, and bless the man who conceived the smallest bolt in her body!—the *Hannibal*, crowded with men, and no end of officers in gold-banded caps with telescopes and glasses all about, who were already looking their best at me as, quite regardless of everything like ropes or safety, I waved hat and white handkerchief like a maniac! 'Ship ahoy!' I shouted; I know a little of the naval vernacular, you see. 'For God's sake, help!' Some answer came back, I can't tell what, and the screw slowed a little, and it seemed as if the giant sidled over towards us. The captain of the brig bounded on the fore-castle—'Stop your clamour, sir! my men will take you! I give them permission, but only on condition that you go at once. They are lowering the boat now. Quick! Come down; I do not want any of these gentry on board my ship.'

"The boat was lowered, so to speak, at the off-side of the brig, and I know not how I got into it. The four scoundrels who manned it were mute, and as we started out from under the

counter, cast a wistful frightened look at the man-of-war which had crept up within easy hailing distance of the *Athene*—the name in gilt letters on the stern of the ruffian Greek. They pulled swiftly for the French schooner. In vain I pointed to the two-decker. No longer attracted by my signals, and seeing the Greeks' boat down and making towards the Frenchman, those on board were satisfied all was right, and the *Hannibal* began to move on ahead. In a few minutes, however, I and all that remained of my poor effects were on board the little schooner *Belle Etoile*, of Marseilles, and I told the skipper my story. 'Sacre matin !' he exclaimed. 'Ah ! les coquins ! Heh ! les scélérats ! Voyez ! ils se sauvent !' and so on. You should have heard him, as we saw the Greek cant round in the stream, fill his foresail and jib, and with all hands hauling away on peak halyards—all that's learnt on board the *Colchis*, Terence—fly down the stream like a bird. And there's the end of my story. The Frenchman—may the Lord guide him in his way over the waters—Etienne Polydore Mathieu Deschamps, as he wrote it for me with a very dirty honest paw, gave me a boat for shore. The Quartermaster-General assigned me these elegant quarters, for which I pay Mrs. Papadoulos egregious ransom. I have picked up a servant, an Italian of high degree, who is now buying me a pair of breeches, I hope, in the Bazaar. All I saved of the wreck you see around you. I have sent off my first letter to the *Hercules*, and wherever I am be sure I will look out for you, and do not forget your old friend now that we are in the field together."

"And this captain, you say, who spoke English so well, was he an Englishman ?"

"Well, I think not—unless he was what O'Connell proposed once your countrymen should be called, and could pass muster as a West Briton."

"And what could he have been doing up here with a Greek brig ?"

"That's more than I can say. His crew looked bad enough for anything—and, odd as it may appear, I have an idea I saw his face before somewhere."

Virgilio, the Italian servant, appeared with a pair of Greek breeches, which suited the long boots admirably, and I set off on my way to discover the whereabouts of the P.M.O. MacPhillip. After much labour of signs and usage of dead languages, as the stones did not prate of his whereabouts, I found him, in his improvised hospital, not in the best of tempers, as he was fresh from one of his daily encounters with Sir George, who, being always in good health, regarded doctors as his natural enemies. My duties were

assigned to me, and with half a dozen medicos I was quartered in the house of a Greek priest. We had quite enough to do. Ships were arriving every day, on their way to Scutari, and there were sick to be landed and taken care of from every one of them.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE GALLIPOLI GHOST.

THERE was a force of British soon assembled at Gallipoli of near four thousand men, and there were French troops in greater number. In the excitement of this new life I was almost happy for a time—that is, I was taken abroad out of the cares and anxieties which came upon me when I had leisure to think. But on post days I had generally a relapse ; my companions believed I was much afflicted by duns. My dear old Bates returned to his nest in the Pyrenees, but only to move off with Major Turnbull, “who was becoming very irritable at chess,” to Cannes. He corresponded with me regularly. From Sir Denis I had short letters now and then, and one day there came within his envelope some sheets of paper—crossed, I grieve to say—which I read over and over again that day. The letter was dated from London, and ran thus :—

“DEAR TERENCE,—My uncle says I am to write to you, as he thinks a few lines from me may be welcome to you, but as he has told you of the failure of all our endeavours to discover any clue to dear Mabel, I think he has exhausted the subject most interesting to us all. I am in much distress at his great dejection. He says he was in the light of a father to her. It is astonishing she has not written. There can be no doubt but that she could have managed to do so if she set her heart on it. Although she had a certain reserve, she was affectionate and warm-hearted, and it is dreadful to be in such ignorance respecting her. I hope next letter I may be able to tell you we have heard of or from her. My poor uncle is full of troubles of his own. He is much incensed against the people of Kilmoyle, and is disposed to abandon his intention of restoring the Castle. Gerald agrees with him, but I do not. At all events, it will be on a much smaller scale. I suppose you have met Gerald, as he is Aide-de-Camp to General Crookencre, who commands a brigade which, the papers say, will be stationed at Gallipoli. I am sure you will take care of him, if needed, and

I only hope, dear Terence, he will not want your help, and that you will not require the services of any of your medical friends either, but the accounts of sickness in the papers rather alarm us about him and you. My uncle is certain the Russians will not be so easily frightened as most people imagine. How I wish I could frighten them ! We are very quiet and rather lonely here. Sir Denis is very much occupied with business, and we refuse invitations, much to my content, for I am little inclined for society. What you and I have gone through since we were little people plucking daisies and buttercups in the meadows of Lough-na-Carra ! Have we not had our trials and sorrows ? We are going to pass the summer abroad, as soon as Sir Denis has arranged affairs ; and I have only stipulated to be near a good post town, so we may get our letters regularly. Rose Prendergast wrote to me soon after you left, in very bad spirits. Instead of going to the United States, she has returned to the Sacré Cœur at Angers, and speaks of taking the veil. Her brother is somewhere in Europe. He it was who advised her to take refuge in the convent. How anxious we shall be if this war really goes on ! You know where to seek for protection and comfort, and every night and morning my prayers are offered up for you and those who are so dear to us. Do not forget to tell me if your head is all right now.

“ Ever your affectionate friend,

“ M. BUTLER.”

“ P.S.—Of course a postscript. Sir Denis has told me a good deal I never knew before about people in India, and your relationship to us. I do not quite comprehend it all, but feel a greater sympathy for you than ever. Mrs. Considine is trying to get an under-tenant for Lough-na-Carra. Her son will only attend to horse-racing. The London lawyer who bought the Prendergasts' little property, has purchased it for a foreign lady,—and it appears it might have been taken from Rose altogether, only for a deed made by her father, which left the place to trustees for her instead of Maurice. There are most curious stories going among the country people. They accuse the native servants of knowing of the attack, and of being in league with strangers, who were seen about the neighbourhood, and, as the establishment had to be greatly reduced, my uncle has sent all his old coloured servants back to India.

“ M. B.”

It is very well that soldiers have some to pray for them at home. There are pious and devout men, who in the hurry of campaigning,

before and after battle, forget not their Maker. But who can think of Him in the shock of arms, when the air is laden with death, and the ground covered with shrieking wretches passing away to their account or engaged in killing? I can remember little sign of our being different from the Turk when first we landed in the East, except that his muezzin called him to prayers twice a day, and that he generally went. No one called us to prayers, nor did we go. But when cholera stalked through our camp, when the winter came and brought men face to face with a more dread enemy than the Russian, then the poor chaplains, whose general characteristics were intense seediness, and who would have been glad of a change of sackcloth, and who had no ashes as there were no fires, were more regarded.

There never was such a time of great exaltation and depression mingled together for most of us as that gathering of the armies at Gallipoli.

Bang! bang! bang! And so on—gun after gun—the old houses shaking—the glasses tumbling out of the lattice windows—the plaster falling off the walls—tiles sliding down into the streets—Greeks surreptitiously scowling—Turks bismillahing—all the dogs barking, and the buzzards whistling with fright.

“Who’s that now, I wonder? Confound their saluting, they’ll bring the house down.” Now it was a General—then it was an Admiral—now the Duke of Cambridge, landing quietly and strolling about in a shooting jacket—then the Prince Napoleon, all cocked hat and feathers, heralded by a salute of a hundred guns from the whole French fleet, and a roar which produced such an effect on Standish’s Italian that he then and there departed, and was no more seen of his master. It was a struggle for life at all times, as provisions were scarce, and the Commissariat could not always be depended on. Officers of rank might be seen flocking round the doors of the bakers’ and butchers’ shops, contending for loaves and sheep’s heads and livers; and I once met my respected colonel with a sheep’s liver on a stick, going to his quarters down the main street in great state, as if he liked it.

But one day appeared on the walls of a very dilapidated cabin in the Greek quarter, chalked in bold characters of no great uniformity, the legend “Grand Restaurant de l’Armée Alliée de l’Orient.” Naturalists wonder how vultures scent a carcase from afar. Let any one who doubts whether man has similar instincts, observe how in a camp or strange city the creature will discover his food. In a few hours there was a gathering of ponies round the door of the Grand Restaurant, and a babel of tongues inside; and the spirited proprietor, who had laid in several cabbages, a

sack of potatoes, three sheeps' heads, some flour, and a skin of Tenedos wine, was speedily obliged to inform his clamorous customers that all he could offer them was pipes, coffee, and tobacco. He was let off with his life on condition that he was ready for all comers next day! It was such a blessing! Few of us had anything to cook even had we had servants who could cook anything. The canteens had the property of losing every useful article if any were ever inside them, and one envied the ancient Greeks who had their meat "roasted skilfully," when he beheld the ration placed before him by Private Dobbs, as the result of his exertions and fuel. In the Grand Restaurant we had sheep's-head soup, not immoderately over-stocked with hair and eyes—and meats prepared with onions and garlic, and fowl not quite destitute of feathers, and pilaff and unsavoury omelets. We had bread and wine, and Turkish tobacco and coffee. So that the Grand Restaurant, especially when a second tin scone containing two candles was added to the illuminating resources of the establishment, and the wall was whitewashed and decorated with several woodcuts, kindly furnished by the officers of both armies, presented a spectacle of considerable animation and brilliancy. We were sitting one night over one of the usual "Confounded shame" subjects, at the plank supported on trestles which served as a table (but wasn't it covered with a piece of yellow calico tacked to the sides?)—there were a horny captain of our old friends, the 4th of the Line, explaining the injustice to which he had been subjected—(they have plenty of "Confounded shames" in the army of France)—"by the system of selection," to a young lieutenant of the Slashers, who was favouring him with a counter statement as to the defects of purchase in securing a fellow's rise in the service—a major of artillery, who had been left to fossilize so long in the East few could see the life there was left under the crust till he broke it, and some half-dozen officers, English and French, each intent on hunting down a grievance, whilst Major Hood, between whiffs of his pipe, gave me shreds of knowledge about the natives;—when we heard a commotion in the town, confused noises and shouts, and then a distant roll of drums.

"C'est l'ennemi!" cried Captain Petit.

"Can it be the Russians?" asked Mr. Smyjith.

"Bosh!" puffed out the major. "Where would the Russians come from? It's as bad, though—it's a fire. And I can tell you a fire means something in a place like this."

Sure enough the major was right! There was a glare in the sky, and the sparks showed the cause was not far off. A priest had been lighting up his pictures in honour of Easter; his legs or

his hands or both were unsteady. As we flew towards the spot, the major asked whose house it was. "Papa Sergius," panted a Greek, in high glee, as a great fire generally is conducive to many little robberies.

"Why, deuce take it!" exclaimed the major; "that's my quarters!"

"And, bedad," added I, "it's a case of '*jam proximus ardet Hugh Callaghan*'—that's the name of my chum, and we live next door to you."

As I rushed upstairs to save my little all, I was followed by a band of French soldiers, shouting out, "*Cassez tout ! cassez tout !*" and it was with difficulty I induced them to abandon that novel method of putting out a fire. The major next door had a similar struggle with our energetic allies; and when the houses had been completely gutted, and mother Papadoulos, and Papa Dimitri, and Papa Sergius, and several other respectabilities, had been quite burned out, there came with imposing tramp, and in no indecent haste, up the street, a strong body of British troops headed by Colonel Wigpole, and followed by three water-buckets to extinguish the conflagration. Fortunately there was at the rear of Papa Sergius's a large garden, in which that inebriated ecclesiastic and his family took refuge as soon as the fire declared itself. As it was surrounded by a high wall, and the burning ruins in front formed a barrier in that direction, we shied all our property out of the windows into the garden; and the onions were smitten down by saddles, revolver-cases, medicine-chests, odd boots, and swords, uniform-cases, and portmanteaux; the apple-trees were laden with blankets, coats, and garments. The major and I held council together. "Where do you intend to sleep to-night, major?" inquired I. "We must sleep somewhere, and it will be difficult to obtain quarters at this hour."

"Here," replied the major, decisively. "Pick up a blanket or two; it's a coldish night. We can put our feet towards the fire there—no fear of it's going out. As the houses are down, nothing can fall on us. They have put sentries on in the street outside, and our fellows there will cover our rear, so that we can sleep till morning very snugly."

And the placid warrior gathered him up the makings of a bed, trod down a patch of onions, lighted his unfailing pipe, and was soon in an unmistakable slumber. With less skill I followed his example, and I was awoke by the sun striking through my closed eyelids to see the major's head buried in a horse-bucket, as a preliminary to an *al fresco* bath which he had prepared for himself by the aid of my macintosh and of Mr. Malony, who had spent the

night among the "Harmoniums," as he thought proper to style the Armenians, in charge of our horses in the corner of the garden.

"That's what comes of letting thim priests marry," said Mr. Malony. "It's hard enough on the layayity to be let do it, but when it comes to a priest, see what happens. They take to dhrink! The ould Papa and Mama there sucked in a big shkin of wine if they had a dhrop last night, and the Mama was the worst of the two! Father Mat likes his dandy o' punch as well as any one, but he'll never set fire to Kilmoyle, I'll be bound, by raisin of takin' too much."

It was the night after that in which the houses of Dimitri and Papa Sergius and Mrs. Papadoulos, and Lord knows how many more decent people, who were not much the worse for the incrimination, fell into the flames and crushed them out, that I, Terence Brady, and Major Hood pitched our tent in the garden of Papa Sergius. I say our tent, because the colonel had in his full knowledge of the Turkish language gone off with me to a respectable old Osmanli in very short jacket, very loose breeches, very dirty fez, and very long pipe, and availing himself of my full-blown splendour as surgeon of the Bengal Tigers, with subterfuge of tongue and many fictions unknown to me, induced that very obliging functionary, who was in charge of the tents, to send up one to the garden of Papa Sergius. Now the garden of the priest was, as I have said, solely intended for domestic purposes. There were trees laden with incipient figs and apples, and the walls of loose stone afforded support to vines and apricots; but the main feature of the Papa's horticultural scheme was certainly onions. A vast bed of that odorous legume spread under the trees, enclosing here and there an island of potatoes or a patch of tomatoes and poppies, and in this sea our tent—a two-poled ridge—was pitched. All our properties were conveyed inside, and the onions were trodden under foot within the walls. Jupp, bombardier, and Angelo, ex-brigadier of the Papal Dragoons, prepared our evening meal. It was of liver, carefully roasted in the Homeric fashion on sticks over the fire, which was blown into life close to the heels of our horses. Nor was it unsavouried of onion. And our drink was of the well in the garden, tintured "as it were" by our united rations of rum. And our dessert was of two long pipes bought of a Turk in the bazaar, and of mountain tobacco. And our talk was of war, and of Turks, and of Don Quixote, which the major read ever and always in the Spanish, translating it now and then for me into racy English. Once more we beat down the upstart onions, which would assert their independence as the cool night-

air toned their blood. We lay down on our blankets, one at each side of the tent.

"Good night, doctor." "Good night, major." The lights were out—that is, each blew out the candle, stuck in a bottle by his bedside.

Just as I was going off to sleep I was startled by the major's calling out rather angrily, "Stop that, if you please! I hate practical jokes, my young friend."

"Stop what, major? I did nothing."

"Why, you threw something at me and hit me on the ribs, that's all!"

"On my honour I did nothing of the kind!"

"You didn't?"

"No, certainly not! I was nearly fast asleep."

"Then don't do it again. Good night."

I was slipping into a dose again, when—whirr—something struck me a smart crack on the ear.

"Thank you, Major Hood! you've had your revenge, I suppose. Now we can go to sleep."

"What is it, doctor?" grunted the major from under a blanket—"what do you say?"

"Why, that I caught it on the ear that time—a capital shot, whatever it was, too."

"I assure you, Mr. Brady, you are quite mistaken. I never touched you."

"Well, it's most extraordinary! There must be some one playing tricks on us."

The major grumbled out something, and I was passing off into slumber once more, when I heard a noise like that of a hand scraping along the canvas of the tent outside. It came nearer and nearer, and it was so distinct I called out, "Who is there?" There was no answer. "Major Hood," I shouted, "there's some one outside the tent!" We both sat up and listened. "They are thieves, probably," he whispered. "They want to start us out of the tent, and lay hands on whatever they can get. Have your pistol handy; mind you don't shoot yourself or me; and let us slip on our boots and await events." I heard the grating of his sword as he drew it from the sheath. We sat up with cocked ears. "It is very odd," remarked the major; "there's Malony, Jupp, Angelo, and the Armenians at the end of the garden; the gate is fast, for I bolted it when we came in. No one can get over the walls without tumbling them down. They can't get over the hot bricks in front. I think——"

And as he spoke the tent shook violently, as though a man had

fallen over one of the ropes. "Turn to the right!" shouted the Major, as he bolted out at one end of the tent. I, pistol in hand, dashed out at the opposite entrance, careered towards the left, and fell over a tent-peg just as the Major in his shirt came round, ten miles an hour, with his Andrea Ferrara whistling through the air.

"There are some rascals about, and we must spoil their sport. Stay in the tent, lie down, and don't stir for your life unless I call. If I am coming near the tent I will cough twice." I obeyed orders. In a few minutes the major came in, heralded by two coughs. "The horses and the men are all right," he reported; "the gate is fast; the walls are untouched. I have looked up into all the trees. The sentry in the street outside the ruins is certain no one has passed, or indeed stirred in the place for the last hour. We must have startled the vagabonds by this time, and now let us try to sleep." And so we lay down again. Once more I was dozing off when I felt something brush past my chin gently, and with a flip, touch me on the nose. I caught at it and held it in an iron grasp. It was a poppy, which had been trampled on and had asserted its right to insurrection. "I've caught the fellow this time."

"Heh?—where?—what?"

"It's a poppy-head. It tickled my nose." The major ejaculated, and soon afterwards snored. I slept too; I was wandering somewhere about the ruins of Kilmoyle, when the tent vibrated as if it would come down on top of us, and as we both awoke it was shivering away into rest.

The major was very savage and so was I.

"Can you see a star through the calico as you turn with your face to the wall of the tent," he inquired—"just about the height of a man?"

I looked; "Yes, I do."

"Then keep your eye on it! Cock your pistol. If any one passes, challenge 'Who goes there?' and fire. I'll do the same. If any one is hurt, it's his own fault."

In a minute or two my star was eclipsed, and the tent was lighted up with the flash of two pistols, for the major fired at his side. Bang! went the sentry's firelock outside. Up jumped the soldier-servants and the Armenians shouting "murder!" in different languages. The horses tried to break away. We ran out to pick up our dead men, and a horrible mocking "hah! hah! hah!" sounded up above us in the air. There was a pretty row in the streets begun at once by all the dogs of Gallipoli, and sustained by the "Guard, turn-out!" of the post at hand and the tramp of the patrol. "What did *you* fire at, sentry?"

"E thenk," quoth Sandy, "et must hav' bin a sperret. Et whasked bee me, lick a bag wheet doggie wi' wings, reet over the het stanes!"

Next night the major and I slept in a tent with two holes in it, which was pitched in a piece of waste ground behind the garden. To this day we do not know what it was, nor do we accept the explanation of Sir George, when he heard the story.

"A nice piece of work you have made, Major Hood, you and the doctor there, about one of those large white owls."

This was the second time a white owl was called in to explain an occurrence for which it scarcely seemed accountable.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ENEMY COMES UPON US.

THE Bengal Tigers are again on their way to take place at the seat of war.

We encamped at Devna, by a pleasant stream which comes trilling over the dam of an old mill into a deep pool, where there were hundreds of eager bathers every morning. The tents were pitched on the slope of a gentle hill above the watercourse; and at some distance in the midst of a well-wooded valley, which put us in mind of the grounds of an English park, spread out a widening lake. Here were posted all the regiments of the Light Division, which had moved up from Gallipoli to Varna, and from Varna, after a halt of some days at Aladyn, to this charming ridge. There were rumours that we were going to Silistria to help the leaguered Turks, and there was a good deal of contentment at the thought of escaping drill, and all the work which was supposed to have been done in the barrack-yard.

Our Light Cavalry are scouring the country towards the Danube in search of any adventurous Cossacks who may get out of bounds. They are scouring something else too. But it is a comfort they are moving. The men are in good health, and the regiments, coy as girls in their first ball-room, are at last beginning to make each other's acquaintance, and little festivities occur between them—simple, yet satisfactory. A bower is constructed by the men, of leaves and branches from the neighbouring woods. The ottomans are heaps of meadow grass and rushes, and commisariat barrels. Rough Tenedos wine makes excellent cup, which is mixed in horse buckets and flavoured with the borage growing wild around us.

The bower is hung with coloured-paper lanterns, and a great cloud of tobacco keeps off the pernicious insects. *Exoritur clamor virorum*—the song and mighty chorus—for in those days the Light Division was in merry mood, and made some little fun out of its respected chief and his peculiarities.

“Give us the song of the Light Division, Peter.”

“Hear ! hear !” cries everybody.

And Peter sings, to the air of “Poor Mary Annè”—

“No one knows me now—oh, crikey ! I’m so worn down

Since I joined the Light Division under General Brown.

Hard drill, no beer, and tough provision ! that’s the fare of the Light Division.

Chorus—Oh ! hard’s the fate of the Light Division under General Brown.

“What’s the use of their voting money, oh ! General Brown !

For chocolate and pots of honey ? oh ! General Brown !

When, instead of giving us our porter, you drills us till we’re dry as mortar, Then d——s us ’cos our hair ain’t shorter, oh ! General Brown !”

&c. &c.

There was no ill-nature in the verses if there was no poetry, and the foibles of the veteran afforded subjects to the Poet Laureate of the Division in many canticles lost to the world, for poor Peter rests, mute and voiceless, under a sod by the Woronzow road, and with him his songs.

But again he sings, to the air of “Bonny Dundee”—

“Come pipeclay your jackets and buckle your stocks !

Awa’ wi’ mustaches and dirt-breeding locks !

Such d——d innovations I’ll surely put down,

It’s nae up with the shakos,” cries General Brown.

“Let your medical comforts be kept in their chest !

Comforts no true Peninsular hero possessed ;

When shot through the leg, o’er a mule I was thrown,

E’er your d——d ambulances, thank Heaven, were known !

“So pipeclay,” &c.

After one of these nights at the Symposium, I went off early to read the letters which had been handed to me. I hoped for an answer to a sad epistle, in which I ventured to—I scarce know, but when the post was gone, I thought over the words and feared they would offend her. There was, however, only a short letter from Mr. Bates, and a note from Major Turnbull, to say he feared my old friend was breaking up, “as his temper was so bad,” and a few lines from dear old Jack Window. He had arrived in command of the *Slowcoach*—a step more for him, as the famous old craft was a heavy—a very heavy frigate—in the Black Sea, and

hoped soon to see me on board, or to beat up my quarters in camp.—Oh, yes! There was a slip of paper from Standish, who was at Varna, to keep near his base of supplies and operations as he said, asking me to come in and see him.

“A noble-minded member of the House of Commons,” he wrote, “has in his place in Parliament called attention to my food, and has done his best to starve me out. But though the minister magnanimously promised I should be put on short commons, I can get a morsel for you to eat, if you come.”

I made out the purport of these missives with much difficulty, for there came in through the folds of the tent myriads of winged beetles, very small and shiny, which put out the candle again and again, and turned the white canvas black with their multitudes. At last, fairly beaten by them I lay down on my stretcher, pulled a sheet over my face, and went to sleep.

The voice of my hospital orderly woke me up.

“What is it? Can’t you call Mr. Squills?”

“He’s there already, sir. It’s very sudden.—The men are crying out all over the camp.” As he spoke, the orderly’s voice quavered a little. “Some of them taken very bad.”

“And what is it, do you think—bad water?”

“I wouldn’t like to say, sir,” replied the man, timidly.

I hurried to the hospital tent. Yes—I was face to face with the enemy I had most to dread! The Cholera was upon us!

There was no escape from such an enemy but in flight. In something like terror the camp broke up, and the Division moved to Monastir. But the hill side was dotted with black mounds.

“I warned the General how it would be,” said MacPhillip. Any one could see it. This is the regular route of the cholera between the Danube and the Black Sea; and he always halts at Devna. Look at that great lake at one side of us, and the valley, in which a white mist rises till it overtops this hill and makes the tents reek every night, and the woods all round barring the air, and filled with decaying leaves and rotting mould.”

Disasters came thick. The news arrived that the cholera had broken out at Varna, and then that it had appeared in the fleet. A tremendous fire destroyed our storehouses and magazines in the city. No one could tell the cause; but it was remembered afterwards that a brig sailed out of the harbour in the midst of the fire, and was scarcely noticed in the confusion. The English officers said she was a Greek, and had French papers as a chartered transport. The French denied all knowledge of her.

From Standish I had an account of the fire, in which he said—“As I was running towards the magazines with your friend Major Hood, who is here attached to the head-quarters’ staff, whom should I meet in a narrow lane, if I am not mistaken, but the rascally captain of the Greek brig. He was coming with some of his vagabond crew at a smart walk in an opposite direction. I think he recognized me, and at any other moment I should have had something to say to him; but we passed in a hurry, and it is only on thinking over one thing and another, and hearing of the suspicions attached to a Greek brig which actually left the harbour during the fire, I begin to think I should have had him arrested.”

Then, after some details of the fire, he said—“Captain Desmond, in whom you are interested, has had a narrow squeak; he goes to Constantinople to-morrow on short sick leave to recruit his health.”

Gerald was a bad correspondent, and only wrote a brief note, in reply to several letters, so I had quite given him up; and this was the first news I had heard of him, except in orders whenever General Crookencre’s Brigade was moving.

But at last the wished-for time arrived; and after the loss of invaluable weeks, the Allied Armies leaving behind them under the turf of Bulgaria and in the Dobrudscha, as many men as fell at Alma and Inkerman together, embarked for the Crimea.

“Where is it,” inquired Sergeant Murphy, “they say we’re going to, Sergeant Wallop?”

“The Crimea,” replied Sergeant Wallop, condescendingly. “It’s the same place, Sergeant Murphy, as Krim Tartary, that we’ve heerd tell on.”

“Krim Tartary! That’s a quare name. I suppose, now, Sergeant Wallop, that’s where the cream of tartar comes from?” inferred Sergeant Murphy, dubiously. “It must be a wholesome place, any ways, that’s one good thing.”

The saloon of the *City of London*, John Cargill, master, was a blaze of lights, and down at both sides of two long rows of tables sat officers in red and blue coats—staff and linesmen, commissariat and medical. The sea captain was at the head of his table, his eyes glistening in his honest, rugged face, under the pent of his shaggy eyebrows, like lights on a coast at night. On his right was the general of the division to which I was attached for the time, for I had been appointed to the staff *ad interim*. Sir De Lacy, erect and soldierly, with a smile on his face, was listening to the ideas of his adjutant-general, illustrated by lines of port wine drawn on the table, and redoubts of filberts and

raisins and almonds, and at each movement of the enemy or the Allies, Captain Jock Cargill rubbed his hands gently, and said, "That's richt gude !—that's gude, indeed, colonel ! I'm with you there."

MacPhillip and the first officer were engaged in a discussion on the comparative merits of the systems of Reid and Dugald Stewart, with occasional skirmishes ament the superiority of Glasgow or Edinburgh as schools of "metafeesicks." Standish, in great good humour and spirits, was sketching, for the amusement of the young fellows around him, an imaginary scene for the *Illustrated London News*,—"Landing of the Special Correspondent of the *Hercules*, and Death of the Editor of the *Invalide Russe*." I was suffering under Marmaduke Blossom, M.D., Inspector-General of Hospitals, who was displeased because I neglected entomology generally, and had not bottled and sent him some of the beetles which had put out my candle the night the cholera appeared. But he was burning with the love of science, and would not hurt a fly except to preserve him, nor a young doctor save to instruct him. He liked lively specimens, however, and the more they fluttered as they were pinned, the more content was Marmaduke Blossom.

We were still all bound to an invisible point (as we had been for several days), to many miles west of Cape Tarkan—a point on the sea—and our destination was more definite than our plans. Up on deck there was a sight such as no living man, or haply his remotest ancestors, had ever beheld. Had the stars of heaven come down and settled on the waters, there could not have been more glitter and sparkling on the dark sea ; for the combined navies of England and France, with the fleet of the Turk, were escorting their floating armies in hundreds of ships, in Cimmerian darkness, to the land where it had its abode ; and at every mast-head hung a lantern, so that as the flotilla glided over the heaving waves the lights variegated the veil of night as the sparks which travel to and fro in expiring tinder. There was not a man on board—not one in all the armada—who had not his cares and troubles, but no philosophy could cause my own to be merged in the multitude of others' griefs. I thought of that, as MacPhillip, having gravitated to Blossom, engaged in a discussion on medical matters likely to come into notice as soon as we were within gunshot of the Muscovite.

"I admit that, as you say, it is not safe to diminish the vital energies in capital operations," proceeded MacPhillip ; "but pain is a great enemy to life. If chloroform renders the patient insensible to pain, you will admit it ought to be administered, unless

positive disadvantages can be adduced against its use, either at the time or subsequently."

"Certainly not!" rejoined Blossom. "I'm not prepared to admit your proposition. Pain *may be* a very good thing! It's a signal given by nature when in danger and aware of it. I think it's a good sign when patients cry out under the knife. I've observed the very quiet cases are generally accompanied by manifestations of low animal energy."

"Great cry and little wool, doctor, is it?" simpered Tony Potts, now an A.D.C. and captain. "If I get a chance I'll sing out, I tell you."

Marmaduke Blossom and MacPhillip were not inclined, however, to expose the arcana to Tony Potts, and diverged into a general digression on the ignorance of the non-professional world—a curious illustration of which MacPhillip adduced in the common remark that pain was cumulative. "You hear it said of a battle-field, where the wounded are lying all about, that there must be a frightful amount of pain. It's absurd; you can't multiply the pain of one man by that of another, and add up the sum total."

"Certainly not," acquiesced Blossom. "It's a fallacy."

"But there must be a deuced lot of fellows in pain, you'll admit," interposed Potts, "and you can add 'em up, you know: eh?"

"I presume you will not contend, Captain Potts, that if one of your men has got a toothache and you have another toothache, that he or you suffer more or less on that account?"

"But I maintain that there will be two of us with the toothache, and that there's twice as much toothache going as if only one had it; and as I see you are both going to argue against me, I'll run up on deck and smoke a cigar."

"It's very melancholy, MacPhillip," said the Doctor, "very."

"It is, indeed, Blossom. Let us have a game of chess."

And not many days after I beheld both the worthy gentlemen with their shirt-sleeves turned up, and with a crowd of assistants sawing, and cutting, and probing—without much care for their theories.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE LANDING.

WHEN we got on deck one morning the low land, close to us, lay like the coast of Essex at ebb tide. Sir De Lacy and his staff on the quarter-deck were gathered round the signal officer, who was reading off the language of the flags. The force was to land on that flat beach there, beyond which we see a narrow lake. At the other side of the lake extended broad desolate-looking plains towards the horizon, where the Tchatir Dag and its chain rose up like islands in the sea. How all scanned the shore which so many were never to leave ! There was all the charm of adventure in strange lands about the expedition. Our chief did not know much more of the Crimea than Jason did of Colchis when he filled the sails of the Argo. Not a creature was visible ; but we heard that, not many miles away, the high bank of a river, flowing into the sea between us and Sebastopol, was occupied by an army. The fleet at last moved in slowly towards the beach, and dropping way, drew up in a belt of black hulls and masts outside the gentle surf. The air was darkened by the smoking funnels, which furnished a pall-like cloak for the landing ; and on a signal given, there pushed out from the sides of the ships long lines of boats laden with specks, red and blue, about to gather and condense into iron battalions, to take seisin of the lands of the Czar.

“How are we to get our wounded away ?” asked MacPhillip of a staff officer. “If there’s fighting, there will be wounded, I suppose ; and Dr. Blossom’s ambulances have all been landed again at Varna.”

“My dear sir ! that is a question for the doctors,” replied Captain Nephew ; “I have nothing to do with it.”

“You may, though, when yev’ a bullet through your weam,” retorted MacPhillip, savagely : “you may think it a staff question then. But mercy o’ me ! what’s that ?—saw you ever the like of yon ?” he exclaimed, pointing with his finger to the strand.

The first boat from the British had landed its freight, and General Sir George Brown was taking military measures to occupy the soil. A party of the Seventh Fusiliers were on the beach, and the General proceeded to walk up the sand-bank in perfect ignorance of what was patent to the whole fleet, that a group of Cossacks had caught sight of him, and, with lances lowered and

heads crouched down to their pommels, were cantering gingerly towards the General.

"I bet ten to one they bone him, Pickles!" broke out Naggett, of the Slashers (and of the Racehorses). "Did you ever see such a thing? I declare I can almost see a grin on the face of the chap with the fur cap who's coming up now."

"Done! I take you," Pickles shouted. "Fivers or sovs., Naggett? In fivers! Done with you!"

"No bet, Pickles! Spoke too late. You waited till the old boy pulled up, and those Fusiliers were moving on. What a horrid chouse. It would have been such a lark if they had carried off the old fellow under the eyes of the whole fleet. There they go! The Fusiliers are firing at 'em. Don't they step along just! Balls! Fall in, there! Mr. Pickles! Company's falling in. Look out for boat number three."

It was all very easy to land, but what to do by the "sad sea wave," ankle deep in shingles, without particular food and no shelter, was the thing. And at night, when it came on to rain—rain that beat up the loose stones on the beach, and made the sea whistle, and I found myself, in distinguished company, under an uptilted cart, which seemed an excellent conductor for the water—I could not even sympathize with poor Standish, who lay in a cold bath in the sand, close beside me, and was in great distress because "his note-book was all in pulp in his pocket, and his letter to the *Hercules* all a mash."

"And what I fully expect—it's the most certain thing in the world," prophesied Bagshaw, from under Lady Hayrake's umbrella, which she had relinquished to that excellent warrior when she bade her husband good-bye and returned from the beach to the ship, "the Russians will come down presently with all their field artillery, take up a position on the other side of the salt lake there, and sweep us off the beach. The same thing as happened nearly in the Catterwally Pass, only I was too knowing for them. And the ships daren't fire. I wouldn't," concluded Bagshaw, solemnly, "give that," and he snapped his fingers, and sent a bucketful of water down his old neck, "for the whole of this force. Wouldn't be surprised if those French got us into it."

"Joy cometh in the morning." It was merely a negative of pain however. The multitude around me was all alive. I landed with three days' provisions cooked, in a havresack, and with a case of instruments and a flask of brandy, the uniform on my back, and my sword, which I overlaid in the night, so that I awoke with a fine impression of the royal arms on my right cheek. The salt water and rain soaked the havresack, and my biscuit and meat

became blended into a very uninviting-looking unbaked pudding. The air was very "raw," and though it was not my custom of a forenoon, I sought my flask, unscrewed the top, and poured out a little brandy into the metal cup—that is, I would have done it if I could. But no fluid came—no gurgle sounded in the dark cave of emptiness; a miscreant hand had robbed me as I slept. Every man there, however, was loaded with his little misery and his little care; and all and each obliged to forget everything but duty! There comes presently down along the narrow belt between the salt lake and the sea, perfectly mounted and perfectly sitting his charger, an old man of singularly gracious presence. He looks as neat as a new pin. His general's plumes wave softly and silkily in the early breeze; his uniform would pass muster at a levée; every button bright and his boots shining like his spurs. His face has the stamp of what may better be called "courtliness" than anything else, upon it. It is not a rugged mountain of features like Cromwell's or Turenne's, nor massive like Waldstein's, nor cut with the haughty beauty of Marlborough's, nor is it cast in the mould at once inflexible and expressive of Wellington's; it is a face destitute of the fire and keenness of St. Arnaud's; its pervading characteristic is serenity—a calm almost sphinx-like—and benevolent "gentlemanliness." One may see such faces above old-fashioned ties and bandanas looking out of club windows in St. James's Street, or at cover side in the country; or you may recognise the type in family picture galleries; and many De Lignes, Schwartzenbergs, Gallases, and the like, have delighted mankind and society and armies by similar gifts of countenance and bearing. The empty coat-sleeve looped to his breast, far more than his staff announced to his army that Lord Raglan was present; for there were regiments then which were not acquainted with his appearance. But all knew their chief had lost his arm fighting against the French, whose troops, serving the nephew of the man whom Lord Raglan must have regarded only as "the Corsican" of his youth, were now to form line-of-battle with the redcoats. He passed on through the mass of men swarming on the beach with a bland smile on his features, very much as if he were going for a morning ride in Rotten Row.

Day after day we halted—the beach was horrible at last! Provisions were landed from the fleet, and from the teeming ships came boats for ever. The nights were fine, and we could sleep in our cloaks with a comfortable pillow of shingle under our heads. All the while I was running to and fro among the sick. The enemy had come with us across the sea.

"The General's man's very bad, sir; can you come at once?"

By the margin of the salt lake the poor fellow lies in his blanket, and kneeling by his side there is a young man in soiled black clothes, who holds his hands, and with uncovered head prays softly; the dying man feebly repeats the words, and looks upwards into the clear blue sky; but his thoughts have gone before him, and the glaze on his eye betokens the near approach of the Comforter. The chaplain bends down, whispers into the ear of the dying man, and crosses his cold hands on his breast. As he raised himself from his knees, I uttered an ejaculation—

“Dick Bolton! you here?”

“Neither of us could be of use now, my dear Brady!”

A few hurried questions—a minute or two given to inquiries after mutual friends—to old times, was all we could spare to each other, for we were both needed elsewhere.

“When I see you again I will tell you about Maurice Prendergast. Where do you think I saw him, if ever I saw one man like another? Landing at Pera from a caïque! Don’t forget. Second Brigade, Third Division. God protect you till we meet!”

And that never was to be. Worn out by fatigue as he toiled on foot after the army, Bolton was attacked by an enemy he had learned not to fear. (He sleeps under a mound which the affectionate regards of his flock raised over him in a vine-clad valley) in a distant land.

CHAPTER XL.

WE COME UPON THE ENEMY.

THERE must be a great change wrought in man’s nature before he ceases to revel in war—not always in the heat of battle, which may find dross where the metal seemed purest—but in the enterprise and adventure of campaigning. It is a new sensation to find you are in danger from men you have never seen—who owe you no ill-will, whom you are bound to kill if you can—and to know that you will be honoured by all your fellows for doing the work. Most men must have the backs of their heads removed and some other matter put in place of the present grouting ere they cease to delight in such homicide; and we may despair, I fear, of ever welcoming the advent of the day when a nation shall be brought to the bar of public opinion and condemned for murder because it has waged war—above all, successful war.

I stood on a sand-hill, and saw the army move from the beach

towards the enemy. It was a sight which filled one's throat and made the heart swell—mine, although I had been working among the sick, and had sent off my last boatful of hopeless sufferers to the ships. The freshness of the morning air, the life and animation of the march, the swarming transports, and their fluttering signals and flapping canvas; the stately procession of the line-of-battle ships and frigates, as they moved on with their advance-guard of swift steamers; the perfect order in which each scarlet oblong took up its place, as brigade after brigade formed, and the divisions extended and spread out over the rolling downs, fragrant with flowers and deep with pasture; the galloping aides, riding from one bright patch of horsemen to the other—the dark masses of the artillery, the black fringe of the Rifles rolling before the wave as it swept over the plain; on our left the cavalry moving in the light of their own helmets, sabres, and lance-points, the dun-coloured crowd of camp-followers, and the scanty arabas—all formed a picture—ah, no!—formed a real body and soul of war, which was beautiful and terrible enough to justify the love and pride of kings! Did I think of my vocation then? Not one bit! I longed to ride with that whirling cavalry, or to march at the head of an obedient column. Why am I obliged to attend to the miserable driver whose leg has just been crushed by the wheel of a gun, and who will never mount horse again or join his comrades of the R.H.A.? It is a descent from Pegasus, and it does me good to touch the hard ground of matter-of-fact duty again. And when at last my turn came to move off with my dear old Tigers, all my enthusiasm was nigh smothered in the heat of the sweltering ranks; for after many days of sea-carriage, the noblest heroes, packed close in ships, and destitute of water, will in tight cloth clothes swelter, to say the least of it, under a Crimean September sun. I had acquired the right to purchase a horse. The cavalry swept in some wretched creatures one morning, and a Tartar, whose mind was much perturbed by fear respecting the genuineness of British sovereigns—he tested them, in British fashion, with his teeth—sold me a soliped which certainly had died of age and muscular imbecility but for hard spurring and the excitement around him. The Brighton downs (not quite so sharply accented) with a bluer sea and flowers springing in the grass in greater profusion than at home—this is what we are marching over in that ordered array from which the blaze of the sun is flashed back at every step in rays innumerable. But before us, and away towards the broad bands of rising ground purpled in the distance, and gradually heaping tier over tier till they are lost in the blue peak of the Tchatir Dag, there ascend, reddening

at the base, pillars of smoke in the still air—now black—now whitening as they die out. The Cossack has been busy with the torch, and he is preparing our welcome of fire and ashes!

Hour after hour we move on. It is a slow march, for the men must halt now and then to rest; and it is needful to keep the order of our advance. During one of these breaks, when an army is resolved into myriads of units, when arms are piled, packs shifted, pipes lighted, and a hum which is the laughter and shouting of thousands all together swells over the plain, I rode on with Major Hood towards our cavalry, which was covering our front very prettily with its Light Brigade. We came to a narrow sluggish ditch-like stream groping through a fat meadow on its way to the sea. By the side of the road close to the bridge were the remains of a whitewashed farmhouse blackened by the smoke of the hayricks and outhouses, and charred by the heat so that the planks of the roof had crumpled up and broken away from the eaves. The major was a man of forethought. "The cavalry can't have had time to rummage this place. Let us go in and see if the Cossacks have left anything."

We dismounted, hitched up our horses at the door of the Post Station of Buljanak, and entered the house. Room after room—it was all the same—furniture broken—drawers open and empty—scattered articles of clothing—every mark of hasty flight. As we opened one door, a cat charged furiously between our legs and was followed by a kid, but in an instant a shot from Hood's revolver rolled the latter over. "There's our dinner for a couple of days, my lad! I'm not sure we ought to have let pussy go, for cat's meat may be a delicacy if the Cossacks have their way. Now I'll just make our kid portable, and do you go on and try your luck. Don't spare anything eatable." I descended into the court just as Standish bounded round the corner in pursuit of a wounded guineafowl, with a smoking pistol in his hand, and ran it to death in the embers of a hay-rick.

"There," he exclaimed, "a few turns more and it would be roasted, feathers and all. By Jove, Terence, campaigning makes a fellow very hungry and dreadfully unprincipled. What a joke we think all this is!—but how savage we'd be if the French were potting our domestic animals about Clapham Common."

And we three marauders pricked along the plain with our plunder in our wallets till we got nigh the line of the cavalry skirmishers which had just halted in a hoilow. On the ridge in front of them there was a dotted line of horsemen, which advanced towards us. As they came nearer, the long flagless lances and

the round bullet-like heads of the Cossack horse were made manifest.

"The *canaille* have got something behind them," said Hood, "as we shall see presently."

The Cossacks came on bravely waving their lances, and their lively little horses curvetted prettily down the slope. Then came a tiny puff of smoke from one, and then another popped off his carbine, and the fire ran from one to the other along their line, and their horses pranced and kicked about more friskily than ever. Our skirmishers answered, and in their ranks too was equal commotion, and much gambadoing, buck-jumping and rearing; but no one was hurt, and the result of the spattering of small-arms was, now and then a little dust knocked up from the dry ground, or a singing in the air as a bullet wandered on its errand.

"It's a capital illustration of the value of cavalry fire," said Hood. "But look, there they are in earnest!"

He pointed to the hill in front, and there indeed rose in sight a forest of lances. Next there appeared a dense mass of horse which halted on the sky-line in three divisions; the centre dark blue, the right white, and the left a light grey.

"Ho! ho! my lads, I thought so," continued the major. "There is my Lord Cardigan and his Brigade, but where the deuce are his guns? These fellows will soon let us have a taste of their iron."

Our skirmishers were falling back. The Cossack line followed them with derisive cheers. Suddenly the centre square of dark blue on the ridge shook itself out, and opening right and left uncovered eight black specks on the hill. Out flew from one of them a fat puff of white smoke, and ere one could count twice a sharp swishing sound heralded but an instant in advance the visit of the round shot, which pitched right under my pony and covered the major and Standish with a violent shower of earth, small stones, and dust.

"We are right in the line of their fire on the cavalry! They take us for the staff, perhaps, owing to this gentleman's splendid gold band. Come over to the left flank," advised our Mentor, who never stopped puffing his cigar for a moment. And as he spoke a shell burst over us and I heard the singing of the fragments; and swish came another shot! and whizz! whizz! whizz! shot after shot all around us! But Hood was imperative against any rapid movement. "No cantering! No galloping! A quiet trot to the flank, if you please, gentlemen."

It was now a very pretty sight indeed. The cavalry was slowly falling back, wheeling in alternate squadrons, with face to the

enemy as they retired, whilst the Russians pressed forward with their guns as if to come down on us ere the Brigade could reach the cover of its artillery and the advancing army. In the distance behind us appeared the British, moving on like Atlantic rollers, and tracing the green plains with bands of scarlet and white ; and through the dust-clouds which came up from the tramp of horses and the wheels of bounding gun-carriages we could make out the artillery hastening to the rescue. The Russian guns ceased not to ply the cavalry, and here and there a horse fell or the ranks shook for a little as a missile found a victim. But the tables were soon turned on the enemy—a British battery, unlimbered close to us, opened fire, and, seconded by another, soon checked the Russian horse and forced them to gather up their guns. Presently they vanished over the hill again, and were seen no more.

“What was it all about, sir?” puffed a stout Rifle captain, very red in the face from running along with his company, into which the last Russian round shot rolled slowly, to the great damage of a poor terrier, which ran at it, and lost all his teeth in consequence. “Are we engaged with the enemy?”

“It was near being a surprise of our cavalry, that’s all, sir,” replied Hood. “More by chance than good guidance it wasn’t. But the lads behaved beautifully.”

The armies halted for the night soon afterwards, close to the banks of the little stream. I do not believe it was intended to do so, or that the sources of our water supply had been thought of beforehand ; but I do know that in that march there was a disintegrating force which was alarming to a novice. The effect was not obvious till the regiments had settled down in their bivouacs. Then the enormous amount of straggling became apparent, as hundreds of men haunted the camp-fires, asking after their regiments, and as baggage and transport and horses became mingled in the lines. I picketed my pony near a fire which Hood’s servant had lighted, and with Standish and Hood watched with great admiration the Armenian cooking our kid and the guineafowl.

“Where were our pistachio-nuts?” asked Standish, cheerily. “Well, I never dined more heartily or better in my life, and Agapo is a *cordon bleu*. A pipe and to bed, say I.”

The major was very moody. He got up, and walked among the men, who were almost invisible, for the night was dark though starlight, and there were few watchfires. Standish and I were asleep by the embers ere he returned. He touched me lightly on the shoulder, and whispered—“Get up, and take a stroll for a moment ! I have a word to say to you.”

I followed him in silence, treading carefully among the sleepers, as he threaded his way onwards till we came to the lines of the sentries in front, and were challenged.

"Look and tell me what you see there, Brady."

"I see a red glow in the sky for miles yonder and fires innumerable."

"Not quite innumerable. I have been trying to count them through my glass, and putting twenty Russians for each fire, I can make out there must be about forty thousand of them."

"I had no idea we were so near."

"Aye! that's the point. You saw all that cavalry to-day? They have at least three thousand horse, I hear. They know to an inch where we are, and could have marked us down like a bird. Our men are worn out—the enemy are fresh. If their general is worth a pinch of snuff, he will slip his horse at us and send his artillery to complete the confusion. Though we are so near, the generals have never thought of running up a trench, or covering a few batteries of guns with an *épaulement*, and—Hallo! what's that?"

It was a man with a large paper lantern, which he held above his head, in one hand, whilst with the other he made violent snatches and clutches in the air. He came nearer, and the light revealed the features of Doctor Blossom. He was out hunting moths! "I caught such a beauty just now, Mr. Brady. Quite new. It will be an immense reputation:" and he went onwards in pursuit, with his lantern casting a halo around him.

"He's a type of us all—the horrid old fool, with his night-moths and butterflies. There he is, floundering about in search of his hobby, and quite happy or careless, although he may never see to-morrow's sun. I'm a croaker, Brady, you see: but I confide my alarms to a non-combatant. I have seen a good deal of war, and my comfort is that the fellow on the other side is likely to be as stupid or careless as we are. Let us come to our fire, if we can reach it, and sleep in hope."

It was not so easy to find our way back. The major was attached to the staff, but he had not secured quarters inside the farm-house, and, as the fires had nearly all died out, there was no guide but his knowledge of the distribution of regiments in brigades. As we were making inquiries of the sentries, I caught sight of an officer muffled in a cloak, who was seated before an expiring fire, his elbows on his knees, and his chin resting on his hands. I approached gently to ask our way, leaving the major engaged in controversy with an angry quartermaster, who objected to be walked upon. A piece of wood fell into the fire, and crackled

up with a sudden flame, which lighted up this man's face. It was Gerald Desmond. At first I thought he was asleep, but though his lids were closed, there came slow, welling tears, which trickled down his cheeks, and, as he raised his hand to wipe them away, I saw a miniature in his palm. He kissed it passionately, placed it in his breast, buried his face in his hands, and his figure heaved, agitated by some great passion. I own I was surprised that he could feel so deeply, and that so light-hearted and callous a man should be thus moved. I checked my impulse to speak. I was bound to respect his sorrow, but the major calling out, "Hollo, Brady! here we are—it's all right!" roused up Gerald Desmond, and, shading his eyes from the fire, he saw me, and without rising, beckoned me over.

"What a meeting," he exclaimed, "my good doctor! I have been looking for you high and low since we landed. Before that, I never could get away to root you out, and we were always miles apart. How are you?"

"Oh! I?" he resumed in reply to me, "well, not very well—a touch of fever, I suppose. We mustn't talk too loud, as inside the tent there is my great chief, the valiant Crookencre, and if he values anything more than himself, it is his rest. And what news have you?"

"None. And you, Captain Desmond?"

"Don't 'captain' me, please, Terence. My uncle and Mary always call you Terence in their letters, and I will take the same liberty, if you don't mind—eh? Very well, then. And I must be Gerald to you! I have heard this very morning; and it's not good news either. The baronet is very hard set to make both ends meet, the property is in such a state. There are no rents coming in, but the old mortgage-holders are lively. They are on their way to Nice, if not there now."

"But, Miss Fraser," I interrupted, "what of her? Have they heard anything?"

"No! And what matters it, after all? She's safe enough, wherever she is, I'll be bound."

"Miss Butler is quite well—so I learn by the last mail."

"Yes, I believe so!" And he was silent. "It is getting cold," he said, after a few minutes. "I will try to get a little sleep." As he stood up to bid me good night, a miniature fell from his jacket, and I stooped to pick it up.

"Don't touch it, sir," cried Gerald, passionately, and put his foot on it. But I saw the face by the fire. It was not Mary Butler's.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ALMA.

MY readers will have learned, if they care to know anything about my character and feelings, that I am by nature one of the quietest of mortals, and will have recognized the perverseness of fortune which has thrust me into perpetual discords, broils, squabbles, fights, and scenes of violence since my birth. And now here was I, on a sunshiny warm afternoon on a lovely autumn day, toiling up a hill which might have been a ridge removed from the infernal regions with all its demon population ! Tumult, indescribable and infinite ! the noise of cannon, for which there is no word, for it is not a roar, nor is it thunder ; the scream of shells, the rush of shot, the deadly song of the leaden birds in continuous flight around, the storm of human voices in all the variety of sound of which they are capable—command, angry urgency, pain, imprecation, hate, furious outcry, and passionate appeals for help and mercy ; all mingled together, with a crackling and hissing of flames from burning villages, and a ringing treble of musketry ; this was the music to which the play was going, the actors terribly in earnest, some only caring to get away if they could, others only anxious to kill or be killed, so that the agony were over soon. With faces blackened with powder and eyes staring wildly, and teeth clenched and with tongues lolling out, the men pressed up the slope, some loading and firing coolly, others mechanically, moving on with very little formation towards the grey-coated columns posted above. I could see their brass-spiked helmets flittering about as the gunners loaded and fired, and the figures of the men, as they sponged out and rammed home, stood out distinctly against the snowy folds of smoke from the guns. To see a man fall gently forward on his face and hands as though he had tripped on a stone and would get up immediately, and yet to know he would never stir more,—to see another spring up in the air, drop his firelock, clap his hand to his heart, and plump into the grass,—to see a man pirouette and reel and drop, and try in vain to rise,—to see a man tumble and roll over again and again like a rabbit shot in full run,—to see a man stagger, lean against his musket, slowly incline himself to the ground and there lean on his arm whilst one hand pressed the wound,—to see a man topple abruptly and then crawl away, dragging a broken leg behind him.—to see a body stand for a second ere it fell, without a head, or the trunk and head lying legless,—to see in the line of

a rush of grape a track of dead and dying, just as small birds are cut down in winter-time by boys in a farm-yard—this was in a few minutes quite familiar to me, and was far less terrible than one glimpse of some terror-stricken wretch as, in fear of being trodden to death, he sought to creep away to a quiet place to die; or the mute imploring faces of the wounded who all at once felt their part in the day was over. I was going I knew not where, for my orders had been of the vaguest. I was to place myself wherever the divisional medical officer might appoint. But he was not visible anywhere. And as to “wherever my services were needed,” why, there was a fair field anywhere. But it was quite evident I was not on the right track at present, as I was too much in the way of glory and had no right to its favours. Old Bagshaw (he used to be so civil) shouted, “What the —— are you doing here, sir? Go back to the rear at once, sir!” as, waving his sword and mounted on a weak-legged Turkish pony, he led the Bengal Tigers over the broken ground. Major Savage, a grey-haired, melancholy veteran, who was much oppressed by Mrs. Savage and many tyrannical children, was quite another being. He curvetted about on a lumbering commissariat cart-horse, roaring, “Now then, that ’ere number one company, whatever’s the reason you don’t close hup, Captain Wilmot? Forerds, number one company—forerds! Hincline your left a little forrerder, number two. That’s it, my lads!”—and so passed on. I saw the Tigers halt in an irregular line and open fire fiercely to check a grey block of helmeted infantry which came gravitating down the slope of the hill. In another second a lumbering commissariat-horse came plunging past me, flinging up its great heels and making for the river.

Bagshaw was quite right—I could be no use where I was. There was no one to help me to dress a wound or to carry away a wounded man, and I turned down towards the Alma, skirting the flaming village, and threading my way amongst the bodies, or avoiding the advancing battalions. The din was loud as ever, but a word of command, or a cry of pain can be heard through all the uproar of battle. To the right of the burning houses De Lacy Evans, with a small staff, was scanning the progress of the action on our left through his glass. He saw that the Light Division, though they had drawn the teeth of the Russians, were broken and over-matched. “Steele,” he exclaimed, “ride over to his Royal Highness, and say I think the First Division should advance at once.”

Down, pouring solidly towards the stream, came the granite-like columns of the Muscovite; and then through the eddying smoke the bearskins of the Guards drew in sight, amid the foliage of the

vineyards, and the river was dammed by that living wall. They arrested and gathered up the stubborn *débris* of the gallant Light Division. Soon the gentle slope was seamed by black and scarlet bands, belted with musket flashes and bayonets. On the left of the Guards we could just catch through the trees the bonnets of the Highlanders; behind them, motionless, part of the Light Division in square. Further on the left, out on the plain, were all our cavalry. Behind us, in splendid order was advancing the Third Division. A group of officers has just passed down to the river close by; a one-armed man, in blue frock-coat and cocked hat with white plume—we all know who he is—cantering gallantly and gaily, straight for the banks crested with Russians, as if he were at a review, leading his staff to do battle. On our right, the French are clustering on the hills and knolls, and fight under the thick vapour of their ever-rolling musketry. The general of the Second Division has galloped with his staff by the burning village to his men, who are engaged in desperate conflict with the enemy on the right of the Guards. Wherever I turn there is work for me.

Strange enough, but true! In the midst of all the clamour and smoke, the swallows were swooping about in the most unconcerned manner possible, rejoicing may be in the great embarrassment of the flies! Once, indeed, a very large bird of that description, as I thought, took off a piece of my hat; and I learned that bits of shell may be mistaken for swallows when there is much smoke about.

Everywhere cries for help, or mute looks of entreaty—lint! and bandage! and tourniquet! And for ever that roar incessant, and with all the monotony of death in its tone! Is it never to end?

Presently there came a break in the storm—a few fitful outbursts as violent as the intensest roll of musketry—then a booming of cannon—It rolls further and further, then dies out—then come dropping shots—another rolling fire, and—“What is that?” A ringing cheer! Oh, such a cheer! It is the wild hurrah of ten thousand men as they stand victorious in the sloppy grass, amid the dying and the dead, on the ridge of the Alma. And far away in the distance we hear the fanfare of the trumpets and the triumphant rattle of the drums of the French, whose dark masses crown the summits of the cliffs as the declining sun falls on the sheen of arms, and touches eyelids which will never open to its rays again.

When the soldier's work is done the surgeon's begins. Let me spare my readers that night of horrors. I feared every moment

to behold the face of some old friend. I dreaded lest I should encounter the look of Gerald Desmond, as the wounded were borne into the barn which formed the operation room and hospital. But he was safe.

"Captain Desmond, I can assure you, is not touched," said poor old Bagshaw, "I saw him at the General's quarters as they were moving me down here after all was over. It was a confounded shame to leave us without supports—a regular massacre, sir. I will talk, sir—if it's my last word, I will say it was shockingly mulled. My dear old Tigers!—we've had a dreadful mauling, but if you doctors can save my leg I'll live to command them again, please God. I defy that rascal who has been persecuting me all my life to stop my promotion this time! I've done him now!"

And we did save old Bagshaw's leg, and he lived to command the Tigers at Inkerman and in the trenches, till he received a wound beyond our skill to cure, for his leg was carried off with the sharpest precision, and he may now be seen stumping down Pall Mall of a warm afternoon to his club, to expatiate on the "confounded shames" to which he is still exposed by his unknown persecutor, in the matter of regimental colonelcies.

The morning after the battle, as I was going over with a report to Dr. Blossom, I perceived a man on the slope near the Head Quarters tent, in front of which there was a table laid out for breakfast, with many covers and a snow-white cloth. He was writing on a plank which rested on two pork barrels, and as I rode up I saw it was Standish. "I hear we had a great victory, and I'm glad of it. But I really should not have known it. I have had such a night!" he exclaimed,—“had to carry my saddle up the hill on my head, and sleep on it, as my miserable pony's leg was broken! Nothing to eat till this moment, when a commissariat officer gave me a slice of leather. Can get no information—have no ink or paper either!"

"What's that?"

"Oh, yes! I've made ink with gunpowder, and that paper I found lying about near a Russian's havresack, and my pen is made of a straw, as you see. My servant has bolted again, and I seriously think of following his example. Oh, Brady! if you saw all the tailing-off there was towards the rear at one time, and if you could have seen the fellows hiding—yes, hiding under the shelter of the high bank of the Alma as I forded it, and now they're swaggering about. Pooh! I'm sick of it.—And the smells, too! —it's horrid work after all."

Ah, well! As I write the memories of those times—few short

years as they are ago—seem almost to belong to antiquity. The halt by the river—and the flank march—the view from Mackenzie's Farm, as we looked on the valley of the Tchernaya and saw the old crumbled crags of Balaclava—the snow-white houses draped in vines—the farms in the plain—the blue sea beyond, and the frowning headlands—the deep gorge of Inkerman—the waters of the harbour of Sebastopol—the spires of the churches—the casemated tiers of the forts and the masts of the submerged navy—and then the triumph of the moment when we, seeing our prey beneath, poured down the steep, and like streams of lava spread over the plateau.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE SIEGE AND THE TRENCHES.

THEN came the work of the siege—the landing of stores and guns—the explorations of the country—reconnaissances of the city and of its works, where soldiers, men, women, and children toiled for ever at fast-rising mounds of earth.

And in due course came the cry of joy from home, the full reward for toils and perils.

"I cannot tell you how delighted and proud I am to see your name in the *Gazette*," wrote Mr. Bates. "My first thought was how my dear old friend would have rejoiced, had he lived to see the day. I think he would have posted it up in the room at Lough-na-Carra alongside the general orders in which your father was promoted. Major Turnbull was very much pleased also, but he is as perverse as ever, and says if he were you he would now throw up doctoring, and get a commission. I mention this to show how far gone he is. Gerald Desmond must have been in the thick of the fight, for Crookencre's division was severely handled. Mat Casey has passed through on his way home, with a ball through his neck. He tells me you dressed it. Is it true the French ran away? He's not quite sure whether it was the French or the Turks. He has taken an eagle, he says; but the major swears the Russians don't carry eagles. Perhaps it was a humbler bird and one not so hard to catch. Turnbull wants to know what is meant by calling Boycott a promising officer? He has thirty years' service. It is well this war is so soon to be over as we hear, for you are wanted back badly. It would please you to hear how Sir Denis has written about you. I'm failing fast,

as you can see from this scrawl, and I want to see you before I say my 'Nunc Dimittis.' Turnbull and I are a pair of wretched old cripples; but because he has served, as he terms it, he gives himself no end of airs, and he puts himself to dreadful pain, trying to walk stiff and straight as of yore."

And then another,—rather cold and formal I thought.

"MY DEAR BRADY,—The intelligence of the victory won by the Allies over the Russians on the river Alma left Mary and myself in much suspense about my nephew, as there was some mismanagement and delay in giving the names of the killed and wounded; but at last our anxiety was relieved, and we were enabled to await the details of the battle without anxiety on his account, though I have lost more than one valued friend and acquaintance in the action. The *Gazette*, with the despatches, has now appeared, and I was not surprised to see Gerald's name in it, for I may say, without foolish pride, that he belongs to a race which has never failed in such trials as these; but my niece and I were much pleased indeed at finding your name in the honourable record, and I congratulate you most sincerely and warmly on the distinction you have attained, and trust it will be but the encouraging prelude to a career of reputation and rapid advancement in your profession. I only see one drawback to it. There is a person who, I am assured, watches as well as she can all that goes on over here, and although she may not see the papers or hear of them, and thus be left in ignorance of your good fortune, I am quite sure should it be otherwise, you will be put to use in her never-ceasing intrigues, and be exposed to immediate operation. She has not been heard of lately by my Indian correspondent, but there is no ground for felicitating you on her demise, and the means of concealment in Native Courts for women are almost unlimited. Since the affair of the Kanawagee jewels, and the attack on the Government escort by the Tangree people at her direct instigation, it is believed she will not venture into British territory, and the Commissioner has been assured she has left Tangra, and has reason to think she went to Lucknow, and returned thence to Jhansi. Although there is no evidence of the fact, I think it likely Fraser is with her. He has never taken as yet any notice of my communications respecting the flight of his daughter, which has caused us such deep regret and pain. I had notices of the destruction of the Castle inserted in the Indian press, and my agents have been most active in their search after him; but after he was dismissed the service, and his name was removed from the list—not to speak of his regiment being called by the name of his second in command,

Poppleton—he has not been seen by any European, so there has been no clue to him since the court-martial, in anticipation of the result of which it was I took poor Mabel to live with us. You will be sorry, I am sure, to learn that there is small prospect of our being at the Castle for some time, as I have no money to rebuild it, and the place is falling into ruin. In fact, the estate is becoming rapidly worse, because the land is so pauperized that the people pay no rents, and devour our capital in the form of poor-rates.”

And Sir Denis went into a treatise which I reserved for another time, as I was going to read Mary’s letter a second time, having merely glanced over it, of course, at first.

“DEAR TERENCE,—The news for which I was waiting most anxiously did not come as soon as that of the great victory which has caused so much rejoicing—and many many others must have felt as I did. But oh, how they are to be pitied who have lost all they loved on that dreadful day! We were unspeakably delighted, and deeply thankful I hope, when we heard of Gerald’s safety and of yours; and I confess that was so much to be content with, I have not been as enthusiastic as I ought to have been about my cousin’s feats of arms and the honours you too have gained in dispatches. Who is General Blossom who reports about you so favourably? I have been obliged to read every word in the papers about the action, and my uncle has called me to account several times for unbecoming expressions of pity for the mothers, wives, and sisters of the poor Russians whom we glory in destroying so ruthlessly. All I hope and pray for is that the war will soon be over, and that we may see you both soon again. We live as quietly as usual, but my uncle is much perplexed about the condition of the estate, and fears we must go back there for Gerald’s sake, though the Castle can scarcely be made fit to receive us. He is for ever writing letters, corresponding, planning, and working; and it is only a pity he is not dealing with a more promising subject, as all the people are full of admiration for his ideas, but say they cannot be carried out. My uncle has some theory in his head about Mabel Fraser, which he will not tell me. He often says, ‘Do not give yourself further uneasiness about her. I’m sure she will turn up quite safe some day, and when she does I hope we may all be glad of it.’ From Rose Prendergast I hear at intervals. I think she fears becoming a nun, lest she should be shut off from her brother, whom she loves very much, notwithstanding his neglect of her. I believe, from what she says, he has been somewhere in the East for a year nearly. What a strange

wandering sort of creature he must be ! It is a pity that, with his great gifts in learning languages or doing whatever he applies himself to, he should be such a hopeless outcast, and be unable to protect poor Rose. The lady who has bought their place went over it with the lawyer, M'Turk, and remained there a few days, but returned no cards. She is a Mrs. Allayne. She drove over to Lough-na-Carra, and also to the Castle, but paid no visits, and went away in a great hurry, leaving the management of the place to her agent in London. When she called at Lough-na-Carra she wore a thick veil, but the servants say she is a very handsome woman. She was very eager to know all about the attack on the Castle and the fire and poor Mabel's disappearance. But I am beginning to gossip. My uncle's bell is ringing, and I have to copy a long paper, headed 'Private and confidential,' before we go out. I am the repository of most important secrets, if I could only understand them. We long for the post, and I am sure you will find time to write to my uncle or me always. Of course Gerald will write to me every post, but he apparently has not so much time on his hands as you have. And so, dear Terence, with my best wishes, I am, as ever, your old friend—becoming very old indeed,

“MARY BUTLER.”

“Of course, Gerald will write to me.” Why “of course”? As I was pondering over the nature of the phrase I saw Sir Denis's letter on the ground in my tent; and Gerald's name came out of the writing to my eyes, and running through his long disquisition on the inherent incapacity of mankind in general to make anything out of the Irishman in particular, “Under all the circumstances,” I read, “it is therefore very good news that the war will not last long, as Mary's marriage ought not to be deferred, and indeed but for her desire not to hasten the engagement, and my own wish to know something more of her future husband, it would have taken place ere this. I can scarcely be indifferent to the tempting offers which have been made to me in the most flattering manner to accept office in India, and independently of the pecuniary advantages and the benefit to the estate, I feel I can do the State there some service, and escape the constant irritation caused by baffling these rascally pettifoggers, legal and political, who infest Ireland. Mary must be settled comfortably before I can think of going, and if ever I have to leave her it must be by stratagem; you, I fear, feel how dear she can make herself to all around her, and how necessary she becomes to one's happiness once he has felt the elevating effect of her mere simple goodness and purity.”

Now I knew this all along—I knew it, and yet I was not prepared for seeing it in black and white. When my servant summoned me to church parade he started. “Are you tuk bad, Doctor?” he inquired anxiously. “I’ll run for Doctor Blossom, if you wish, as you don’t attend on yourselves. Shall I, sir?”

The day after we went up to the front the division was formed up on the verge of the plateau, from which the ground receded and fell towards Sebastopol. The morning was bright and clear, and the houses in the city were as yet distinct and sharp-cut, in their integrity of roof, and wall, and window. The sound of the church bells came at intervals to the ear, and between the oakum-coloured earthworks which now girded the city, and the bistre-hued lines which marked the batteries whereat we were labouring, ascended the hum of voices from the working parties. The regiments, in forage-caps, diminished sadly in rank and file, and much dilapidated in uniform, were in a hollow square, in the centre of which was placed a big-drum, as a reading desk. The general and his staff were stationed in front of the drum; and as I arrived, our chaplain, the Rev. Elias Whittlebury, was advancing towards his reading desk. He began service under some difficulty; for not quite understanding the nature of the preparations, he was raising one leg to get up on the drum when an excited band-master rushed out, roaring—“Ye’ll go through her, I tell ye! Take off yer fut! She’s the only big drum in the whole division!”

And again the congregation was rudely disturbed. The Russians had probably been watching for some time in wonder the redcoats on the edge of the plateau, and had refrained from decisive action, but, resolved at last to try what we were at as we were within range. We had reached the most solemn part of the Litany. The responses of the men, deep and full, rolled down the ranks after the thin, sharp voice of Mr. Whittlebury.

“Give peace in our time, oh Lord!” he quavered, and the sonorous combination of his prayer rang through the square. “Because there is none other that fightest for us, only thou, oh, God!”

Two cotton-like balls suddenly grew out of an ugly redoubt, which grew and swelled in quick expanding folds in the clear, still atmosphere.

“Look out for shells!” cried the sentries, along the edge of the plateau.

“To-whoo! to-who! to-whoo! to-who! tootle! tootle-too!” sung the voices in the air, rapidly approaching.

“Shells!” shouted every one; and in an instant the Rev. Whittlebury, followed by most of his flock, was scudding away

from the ground he had occupied, leaving the big drum, and the general and his staff and officers looking up with craning necks at the two iron globes, one of which burst with a gush of hot air and a shower of splinters right over the drum, and the other burying itself nearer to the flying congregation, threw over them a cloak of dust and earth.

There is little society or social intercourse in an army on active service. Each corps and regiment keeps to itself, and breaks inside itself into fragments and small coteries. The mess disappears, and officers, surly as Achilles, feed in their tents apart, or associate in knots tied by self-interest. The Tigers never go near the Slashers, the Greens only see the Reds on their flanks, front, or rear, in line of march, or in trench reliefs. The Heavies are away down at Kadikoi, and the Lights are towards the front. The Artillery are so busy, they have less time than ever to shake off ubiquitous exclusiveness, and the Engineers are taping and measuring and calculating and drawing, each man for himself. And I, in my little way having, alas ! plenty to do, had no time to visit or gossip. So much the better ; for I had no leisure to dwell on my own private cares, save when I sat down in my tent to my tin of ration dispensed by Mr. Malony, *secundum artem*, that is, raw or burnt as the case might be. When the tent was drawn close, and the candle stuck in a bottle was placed on the top of a cask which served as my table, I was sometimes left alone for awhile, and communed with my own thoughts, and was still. The canvas walls indeed flapped with the concussion of the artillery, for our bombardment had begun, and was going on continually, and the obscurity was relieved by the constant flashes of the cannon in the batteries below ; but these speedily became the natural accompaniments of every night, and the only *désagrement* they caused inside the tent was the shaking down the myriads of sleepy flies which hung on aloft round the tent pole. By day there was ever-recurring duty—sometimes in hospital, sometimes in the trench. I could not go so far as Crookencre's Brigade to see Gerald Desmond ; but I knew he was safe, as day after day I looked over the return of the wounded in Blossom's office ; and once I saw him, a long way off, with a batch of staff officers following his chief, who was reconnoitring Sebastopol from the Lime-kilns.

The bombardment opened. It had failed. We walked back from the White House, whence we had looked on at the scene—beheld the advancing fleet, saw Sebastopol girt round with smoke and fire, and torn with shot and shell, and still replying with increasing energy, till the earth shook as inverted cones of earth

and guns and bodies were tossed up into the air from the exploded magazines of our allies. Hood, now in charge of a section of trench and battery, effected material alterations in the aspect of the Malakoff tower, and removed the upper story by a vigorous pounding. The British gunners reduced the Redan to eloquent silence, or ejaculations few and far between. But the French, whose trenches were on the lower ground used whilom by the enemy for practice ranges, and whose batteries were nearer, more lightly armed, and less scientifically made, were simply snuffed out.

"Yes, indeed, snuffed out," repeated Standish, "and the assault can't take place for ever so long. So much the better, some of my friends say; for they don't think it would succeed, and if it did not we should be in a bad way. But then we must go at it some time or other, and I think if we have any Christmas dinner at all it will be eaten on this classic ground. I should like to know what he thinks," he added, nodding towards a horseman riding in advance of his staff, and followed by an escort of hussars. "How silent they are!—no wonder. They galloped past and nearly over me this morning early, laughing and talking so cheerily. And now all mute as mice. Well, my boy, I have my troubles too! And I daresay you have yours too, eh? Of course you have. It appears I made all sorts of mistakes in my account of that battle, shocking to say. You saw me writing it. There's old Bagshaw been at me, all spurs and moustaches and indignation, to ask what I mean by not saying the Tigers, and they alone, won the day. Colonel Grummett wishes me to state that it was he directed the guns which obliged Menschikoff to retire. Sergeant Todgers laid the piece which decided something else. The Slashers are indignant because I said they came up a hollow, as they swear they were on top of a ridge; but I have proved to Major Babbs' satisfaction, that as they got on the ridge they must have come up the hollow. Then all the fellows who come privately and confidentially to give me bits of information, which generally means what they have done themselves, and what others ought to have done but didn't, are savage at my neglect. The cavalry are in a bad frame of mind, because they are chaffed for not pursuing the Russians. The General of Division and the General of the Light Brigade won't speak to each other. The Admiral of the Fleet is jealous of his second in command. Tunks is furious because the credit of laying the buoys is given to Junks, who merely superintended it. Hawser, who invented Balaclava, is wroth because Tompion's name appears as discoverer. The P.M.O. is regarded by the General in Chief as a natural enemy, because he wants ambulances and hospital impedimenta. The Commissary-General, who feeds

you all, is in a constant state of war with head-quarters. When the quartermaster-general approaches the adjutant-general, the very feathers in their cocked hats bristle, as if they were the crests of rival bantams. We hate our allies the French : I daresay the French hate us. We both hate and despise the Turks ; and the latter, poor devils ! have every reason to return the compliment. It's all wrangle, jealousy, thwarting, cavilling all round, and I'm quite sorry and shocked at it all. ' But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.' "

" Surely you are drawing a very gloomy picture, my dear Standish. "

" I am not adding a touch of colour. In fact, it is but a very feeble, washy, pen-and-ink sketch in the most meagre outline. As an example : Last night a medical party called on me, ' in confidence,' to abuse you, because you were named in dispatches for your exertions, whereas he swore he did your work, as he was attending you for delirium tremens. "

" The rascal ! What was his name ? Standish, I insist ! "

" My dear Brady, confidence can't be broken. I only laughed, and said I did not write the dispatches—that I knew you very well, and saw you the very day he named. Poor human nature ! The very men who are guilty of such littleness will, in their moments of inspiration, instinctively and uncalculatingly do the noblest things. Oh, the heart is much better than the head ! The heart feels—the head thinks ; the heart acts—the head plots and plans. Here is this army full of courage, devotion, and daring, and yet it is a hotbed of small dislikes, intrigues, and jealousies. It is a terrible profession after all in which a man gains directly by the death of his comrade. "

" Is not that so in all professions, Standish ? You are becoming very morose and harsh, I think. Does not Dr. Small feel a little flutter of something unlike pain when he hears the first man in his profession—that is, in his district—has been removed *ad auras superas* ? Is there not a sigh of resignation or contentment heard in the chambers of our Temple friend when he sees the announcement of a judge's removal to the Courts above ? Nay, may we not believe the doings of death among the hierarchy excite a more active sensation than mere pity in the labourers in the Church, and quicken the pulse of pale cloistered fellows and energetic country clergymen ? "

" Perhaps so. But there is no *Gazette*—and no certainty. If Major Brown fall, Captain Smith must see in the *Gazette* his name very soon, ' vice Brown, killed in action.' That makes the difference. Even in peace-time there are, in our army at all events,

and I dare say in that of our allies, many causes operating against the real *camaraderie* which is supposed to be so common by those who know nothing of the facts. There are questions connected with leaves and purchase cropping up continually. But you, for example, have nothing of the sort in your branch of the service."

"Haven't I, indeed! You have just been letting out of the bag one of the many cats which would tear and claw me if they could, because I was mentioned by my Chief, and if any fellow brings in a new beetle some day, he may go over my head at once, in spite of the good old fellow's sense of justice."

As to what followed in order, is it not written in the Chronicles and recorded in books and enshrined in Gazettes? If Gazettes are not favourite reading, at least they bear testimony to the faith of those who wrote them. A generation is rising up—nay, it has arisen—which knows not the ragged Joseph who toiled and suffered for his brethren in a strange land. It is like enough never to read these Chronicles or Gazettes, for there is ever an interval between the wedding of Fact and Record and the birth of History which no student cares to study. But even now Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman are historical. Of those who fought, how little remains! For centuries men live and die in easy profession of an untested faith. Suddenly comes upon another race of believers a trial—an ordeal sharp and burning. And lo! the faggots crackle and the martyr dies. So it is with the soldier. For years he is the mere laced and feathered ornament who struts about for the amusement of the spectators. His lace is jeered at and his feathers are the scorn of the philosopher. The moment comes—the *dies iræ*—when the Nation demands a sacrifice to Public Weal, or to Honour, or whatever may be the Idol which is led forth to battle; and the soldier becomes the Hero—almost the god. But what is the cost? The Chancellor of the Exchequer counts up his figures. There are so many officers and so many rank and file, and their price is so much a head. Is it not fair? Must we not buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market? When we deal in blood and flesh and bones, should we not pay as little as we can? *Dulce est pro patriâ mori*. It is decorous also. "It is," says the washy French periphrasis, "the best of fates and the most worthy of envy." But at least let the country be the better of the sacrifice. It is a sentient Juggernaut under whose wheels the soldier bleeds. The immortality of the Gazette (long since defunct and embalmed in yellow paper and faded ink) is theirs who do and die, or who live on to find that the petty skirmish of to-day is more exciting to the world around them than

the great victory ten years old. To me all the terrible trials, and anxieties, and sorrows of that glorious gloomy winter appear now as insignificant incidents of my own personal life and history. How well, indeed, I remember Balaclava! But linked for ever with the recollection of that morning, when from the edge of the plateau I looked down on the hosts of the Russians carrying the redoubts spreading over the plain, and sabreing the Turks till they were broken by the thin red line, then swept off the field by the might of our Heavy Horse, pursued and charged home in the very centre of their battle by the scanty squadrons to whom Duty and Courage were trusted leaders, is the memory of the few lines which came to me in my tent, as I was summoned to turn out and heard the booming of the first guns. A few lines in that well-known hand!—they led me back to the days when I walked by her side and loved her with the childish love which became all that I lived for, as I lived on.

“I am much touched, my dear Terence,” she wrote, “by your kindness, and all the more because it is so utterly impossible for me to show you I deserve it. It is delightful to think that I have a friend on whom I can rely and to whom I can open my heart. I always look on you, dear Terence, as I used to do so many years ago, when we were children at Lough-na-Carra together, and when I was your elderly monitress. And what I have just read in your last letter” (the epistle I feared so much) “has strengthened, if that were possible, my trust in your ever-continuing regard.”

And it is strange enough that on the very night of Inkerman, as I returned from my hospital tent, a letter from her lay on my little table, with a whole mail from home—Sir Denis, Mr. Bates, Major Turnbull, Rackstraw, Casey, Lord Bellbrook—everybody. I opened and read it. It was in my hand when I was aroused by the thunder of the Russian guns playing on our camp, and by the crashing of their shells among our tents; and I put it in my breast as I hurried in the fog to my duty at the hospital tent. That tent was literally blown to pieces by a shell! When I went back to camp, all that remained of my own tent was a charred stick, which represented the pole! Again, the night before the hurricane of the 14th November, which caused us such unutterable woe, I received another letter from her, and when I awoke in the morning it was beside me on the saddle which served as my pillow. So it was I came to look on a letter from her as a forerunner of some great trouble, but also as a sure guarantee that I should escape from it.

Why should I dwell on the horrors of that winter? My story is running on. I will tell you now a portion of it, which seemed

to me at the time like a nightmare. It is best told as I copy it from the pages of my journal :—

"*Jan., 1855.*—I had a hard day of it. Poor Wilmot died at 3 P.M. yesterday. He was delirious at last, and his death very painful. Tony very ill, and I can't move him to Balaclava—lost Sergeant Evans, Corporal Malony, and four privates from dysentery and camp fever. All might have been saved if I could have given them proper food, clothing, and medicine. Also one private from shell wound in scalp. Am I doing my duty to my poor sick and wounded properly? How horrible this war is to me! The surgeon sees the machinery of glory at work—he is behind the scenes and can examine all the tricks and traps and practical working of the effects—amputations and extractions, and plugging of wounds, groans, bandages, gangrene, and death, so often the only and the best physician. We hear the Czar relies on General January, but he has powerful allies at home—I am too poor a creature to attend to my duties properly. The news from 'home,' as I call it, is distressing. I can't get any of the clothes or comforts dear old Bates and Sir Denis and Mary have sent me.

* * * A terrible night; warned to attend trenches. Fell in with party after dark, and went down the Valley of the Shadow of Death as it has been named. Snow deep in places—bitter cold wind. The men most extraordinary to look at—pieces of matting round their legs, and sacking and bread-bags round their bodies—feet bound in sandals of rags, head-dresses of all kinds. The Colonel in a sheep-skin, with the wool inside, and the skin curiously painted—his head in a muff sewed up at the top—men very weak—short rations just now—very silent as we marched down, crisping the snow under our tread. But to return to the trenches. We occupied advanced parallel and rifle pits, with French on our right. I was established in 3rd parallel in a battery, where there was a little shelter in a kind of hut built of gabions and sand-bags; Major, now Colonel Hood, commanding the artillery, beside me in his cloak. Camp very silent—could hear the clocks in Sebastopol. A round shot now and then comes whistling through the air, and we hear it thudding into the ground behind us—any one gone with it, I wonder? There is a pat-pat-a-pat of small arms from the left, where the French and Russians carry on an active skirmishing; but in our front are deep ravines, and we cannot get so near. Through my half-closed eyes I watch the starlight glitter of the fuses in the whirling shells as they sail in great circles through the air * * * I was aroused out of my sleep by a man leaping on my body. The moon had risen, and showed a horrible sight. The parapet was swarming with our

men, who were flying pell-mell from the trenches in front, mingled with the Russians. The enemy had crept up a ravine, rushed into our parallels and then sweeping across the rifle pits, had come bodily up to the batteries. So sudden was it, Hood had no time to get his men together ; as I rose to my feet I saw a Russian drive his bayonet into the body of a man who was still asleep in his blanket. A Russian officer, close to me, levelled his pistol at Hood, who was rallying the runaways with surprising energy and coolness. I struck up his arm and the shot flew high, and as he turned upon me I ran him through the sword arm, but my foot slipped and I was thrown down in the rush of men. I tried in vain to rise—two men had fallen across my chest, and with them a gabion displaced from the parapet had rolled on my legs—I was helpless, but I could see and hear. It was an awful scene. The shouts and curses of the combatants, the glistening of the steel in the moonlight, the angry faces, the chink of the sword and bayonet, and the pulpy sort of sound with which they ran home—the screams and cries, and the various attitudes of men struggling in the snow, locked in death-struggles, rolling over and over, falling, rising again, and above all the pale moon serenely sailing through the sky. The Russians only used their bayonets. There was no firing, but I heard the alarm in our camp, and the drums beating far away. And soon the trench guards behind us came pouring down and drove the Russians before them, so that once more the retreating enemy filled the battery which had been deserted by all but the dead and dying, when they pressed on in pursuit of our men. What I am relating passed in a second. A grizzly moustached bullet-headed old man gave orders to spike the guns, and set the example himself, but my eyes were fixed on a younger man, whose figure and air recalled some one I knew. He led three or four men straight to the magazine of the battery, and turned at the entrance to give some orders to his followers. His flat cap, with a metal cross in front, was pulled over his brow, and the light was not clear enough to permit me to discern his features plainly, but I thought his eyes glowed with a fire I had seen before. Hurrah ! here come our lads ! Ragged, worn, pale, see how they follow that tall, grey-haired man, in the Engineer dress, who is flourishing a walking-stick, and mark how they rush down after Hood, who is making straight for the old nail-driving Russian ! And here is old Bagshaw and the Tigers. Bravo, my lads ! give it to them ! See where the snow is stained with the blood of the poor fellows, bayoneted as they slept ! The old Russian major stands at bay in the embrasure, and meets Hood's thrust by a skilful parry and lunge, which very nigh finished my good

friend. He leaps into the ditch : he is the last Russian in the battery. There is a flash almost in my eyes. For a second I see the figure of the man who is deliberately discharging his pistol into a powder barrel. It lights up a face about which there can be no mistake—Maurice Prendergast ! ‘Maurice !’ I shrieked out, and, by an effort of maddened excitement, was rising from the snow, when there came a mighty blast of flame, and a confused ringing in my ears, and then I was lifted or thrown up like a straw in the air * * * * Maurice Prendergast had fired the magazine ! That was my first thought when I woke from the dream of death. I was sure of it. He was within a few feet of me. The scar on the cheek, the intense fierceness of his eye, every line in the tortured face were as plain as is the sunlight for the brief moment, but still how could it be he who stood there, in the uniform of an officer of Greek volunteers ? It was no dream—I lay in the midst of mounds of earth, still smoking and hot—the parapets, sand-bags, and gabions had disappeared ; the guns and platforms, overthrown, were sticking on end, or scattered up and down over the blackened snow and the upturned ground, from which yet came welling up the fumes of the explosion. A few men lay dead or dying around me, and trunks of bodies and limbs further off ; as I, scarce venturing to think I was alive, arose, and staggered like a drunken man, the Russian artillery opened on the battery, and shot and shell tore through the rifted parapets and voiceless embrasures. But soon from right and left, replied our batteries, and diverted their attention. Wonderful to relate, the loss turned out to be very small, considering the tremendous row the explosion made. Gordon, Hood, Bagshaw are all safe, though Hood is shaken and burnt (so am I, by the bye) ; and the latter had the battery all right by the morning. Poor Nash is *non est*, and Pelter, of the Greens, and thirteen rank and file killed, wounded, or missing, but we don’t know yet how many suffered in the surprise. The old Russian, who turns out to be the major who led the attack, was found dead in the ruins. Our fellows escaped so well, because they had crossed over the parapet, and were ‘chiveying’ the enemy, when the magazine was blown up. No trace of the officer who was like Maurice—of course it’s a mistake. But he had a scar on his cheek too. Could it be he ! Nonsense—the idea is preposterous. But if it were, what a fitting end for that implacable nature.”

The incident recorded above was but an event like another, and soon passed out of my mind, or was driven forth by the pressure of the struggle for life which came upon us that winter. Snow and chilling blasts—furious gales and driving rains—sleet and

frost, and then, worst of all, rapid thaws and dense fogs compassed us round about. I was racked with fever, but I would not give in as long as I could contrive to crawl round among my patients, and it was a sore thing to know what could save them, without being able to apply the means. I then crawl back again into the hole which has been dug out by my servant, and to which my tent serves as a kind of lid, and there pore over my old letters and newspapers from "home," till my ration is cooked and eaten, and it is time to turn in for sleep, or turn out for duty. I saw the gingerbread without the gilding indeed.

Standish was in Balaclava. Now and then I met him in the front, or pottering about the trenches. He had been living at the Head-Quarters Camp, but the day of the great storm his tent disappeared, and he was fain to seek shelter in an apartment in a miserable cabin in Balaclava, to which the room of Papadoulos's beehive was a state drawing-room. I visited him once—wading literally knee-deep through filth indescribable which blocked up the yard, and ascending by a shaky ladder-like flight of steps to a verandah, which led to his quarters, abutting on the harbour. The gaping floor of his room gave free access to the fumes of the reeking stable beneath, where diseased horses rotted and died. The plaster was off the walls, the windows filled in with paper and boards, and his bed was a buffalo robe, sent out to him from England, which was placed over the planks.

"It is a splendid bed," he said, "if one could sleep in it, but I really fear some day the fleas will walk away with it. What would I not give to be *ordered away*! If I tell the truth I get into disgrace here, and am maltreated by every one, and if I don't tell the truth I get into disgrace at home, and neglect my duty. I get into such absurd scrapes too! The day after you saw me at Mrs. Papadoulos's, in Gallipoli, I had a scene with the authorities. I was writing to my chief with a steel pen, and in a moment of reflection I put it on my knee—it rolled off and disappeared through the floor. At once there rose from below a shrill cry, and in another moment Papadoulos, *furens in mediis*, was before me with her youngest born in her arms, and the deadly point still quivering in the infant's head. What odds against the event! She accused me of a design on Zoe's life—appealed to the police of France, and I was glad to get off for fifty francs. Look out at that window. Do you see those square boxes? There is a Turk sitting on the pile smoking his pipe. Well, they are all live shells. The other morning I threw a cigar end into the yard, in utter ignorance, and there was a provost-sergeant

in my saloon in a minute, to inquire whether I meant to blow up the place."

Standish spoke of his young wife, and of his little miseries, and of his great ones, in the same mood.

"With all you fellows it's in the way of trade to do these things—to be, to do, and to suffer," he laughed. "But I am an interloper—a fault in the stratum—nobody's death can give promotion in my corps—I may fairly say to my position, as Lovelace sang to his mistress—

" 'I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.'

Oh, it is a weary task, never to be thoroughly fulfilled—to look on from the insignificant Olympus of criticism on the turmoil of the fight—to note the defects in the order of battle—to see where Achilles is weak and Hector fails, and to hear the cries and see the wounds, and then, with earnest hand, to trace—or strive to trace, and all in vain—the outlines of that which changes for ever as you sketch, and to record the notes which are drowned as they are played by the crash of the ever-succeeding chorale of the tremendous opera of this grand maestro, who works on the cannon and the drum, and whose fingers now never tire."

Standish had an incoherent mode of speech, but he could write more clearly than he spoke. I heard from him now and then, and read besides in his plain narrative news that interested me of the very events which were passing around me and of the very people I was among.

"You will be glad to hear Captain John Window, whom you irreverently call Jack, has quite recovered from his wound, and is made a C.B. He has got the new ninety-gun screw, *Anaxandrown*, and is for ever out with his boats playing the deuce with the fishing stations and caviare depôts of the Ruski, instead of having a regular go in, as he wants, at the forts and shipping below you.

"The firing last night was caused by Dodger Brockley, who mistook his way and got in among the French sentries, and when they challenged he shouted out, 'Bono Ruski! Ruski Bono!' ran down the ravine and set the whole camp alive. The French are savage; for they say the day before the sortie in which they were so badly mauled, when our battery was blown up, an English officer walked through their trenches, and suddenly leaped over the advanced parapet and bolted into a Russian rifle-pit, and that he was the very same man as the Dodger, for he had a scar on his face."

It was from him, too, I first heard of Gerald Desmond's wound—of his departure from Scutari—of his convalescence. I applied for leave to go down there, that I might be near him, and so keep the vow I had made and earn her gratitude, though he had so utterly neglected me, and excited suspicions in my mind which I could not distinctly analyze. But I was refused. Morning, noon, and night it was the same routine of painful duty month after month, for when plenty came with fine weather the work to be done increased, and what that led to none knew so well as the doctor, except the sufferers themselves.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MY INDIAN VISITOR.

THE first attack on the Redan—our inglorious 18th of June—was over. It was fatal to more than those who fell on the rugged glacis and cumbered the ground in front of the grey lines of the Russian batteries. But we shared the bread of bitterness with our allies. There was a great mortification spared to us, though there was enough of humiliation and pain for our army. There was plenty, there was sunshine, but there was sickness and there was sorrow in our tents. And the white-haired old man who commanded us, destined now, at the close of his career, to see for the first time the troops he was so proud of, turn their backs to the enemy, fell ill and died. He bore up with dauntless spirit, and with that passive fortitude, in which the impulsive, passionate St. Arnaud recognized the heroic type, against the calamities of the winter, the disappointment of his hopes, and the deadly delay of the siege. Alma and Inkerman, and Balaclava, were famous names to add to the roll of our achievements. But in the despondency which came on him at last, there was no comforting reflection ; and although he was gracious and calm and unperturbed, if not cheerful, the glow of success which had given elasticity to his spirit was gone, and the bow broke. How sad it was for us when the dead chief was borne away from the shores of the Crimea ; and when his staff, clustering around his honoured bier, appeared to warn us that there was a new generation arising, forced into life in the heat of battle ! Wounds and death all around. Every hour a new victim—every day a fresh cargo going to the hospitals on the banks of the Bosphorus.

It was on one of the glowing evenings of a Crimean summer, when the sun, setting on its crimson bed stretched on the sea in the far west, was followed by the longings of the dwellers in the serried huts and tents—some of whom would never see its rise—that, as I was returning from a solitary ride to my hut in rear of Cathcart's Hill, and had just dismounted at the door, a stranger rode up, and inquired "if Dr. Brady was in?"

He was a young man of a slight, graceful figure, dressed in plain clothes, and with the air of an English tourist; and at first I supposed he was one of the many T. G.'s, or travelling gentlemen who haunted the camp; but on looking at him, I saw he was of darker hue than the most weather-beaten European. The rays of the sunset lighted up his copper-coloured skin and full dark eyes. He handed me a few lines of introduction from Standish.

"The bearer is an Indian Prince, whom I have met down here" (he wrote from Constantinople, where he had been obliged to go for a few days' change of air), and who is on his way back to the East, after a repulse at the hands of the Government in an attack on certain lands and moneys which he thinks are his by right. He is very anxious to have a glimpse of the siege works, and as you are up in the front, I give him a few lines to say," &c.

It was very provoking. I was engaged to dine at a neighbouring mess, and I could not go down with him to the trenches; but I invited him to come with me to dinner, and assured him of a hearty welcome.

"You forget, sir," he said, "or rather you do not know, I am a Mussulman, and I might be foolish enough to see something at dinner which would offend my prejudices, and cause me to offend your friends. Ah!" he continued, with a smile, "do not think me such a fool. If I were hungry, I could eat pigs as well as the best of Christians. But the fact is, I have dined already. I only want to see the trenches. If you can put me in the way, and lodge me and the poor horse I hired at Balaclava, you will do more than I dared to expect, and will much cause my indebtedness to you."

I sent for a pass to the head-quarters of the division, and led him to Cathcart's Hill, whence the panorama of Sebastopol, girt with its ramparts, and encircled with the network of zigzags and parallels, lay before us, to explain the principal points before my servant returned. It was a beautiful sight—not such as might have greeted the eye from some heaven-kissing hill above the plains of Troy, but far grander and more terrible. Silence reigned perchance along the front. The reliefs were gathering to march down the ravines. I pointed out the French on our left and on

our right, and our batteries and parallels, and the whole array of the Russian works, from the sea to the wall-like heights of Inkerman. His quick eye followed me ; his intelligence grasped all ; he scarcely asked a question, but stood, with his hand shielding his eyes from the sun, regarding most intently the British batteries, and counting the embrasures occasionally through his glass ; nor was he unobservant of me. I found he was scrutinizing me closely with evident interest and curiosity.

"You are a great people, you English!" he ejaculated, at length. "But you are not so great as you were. Here are you and those Rustums the French—and the armies of the Sultan—and the little Sardinian army—with all your fleets and your famous soldiers—beaten by the Russians! No! you are not so great as you were. And yet you think you will hold India for ever?"

"We were not beaten by the Russians, sir! They have——"

My answer was interrupted by an outburst from the Redan, and the enemy's batteries in our front. Shells burst along our lines—round shot tore up the parapets of our works, and some came lobbing and bounding up to the stones where we were standing in front of Cathcart's Hill.

The Prince was deadly pale, for one of his hue. He turned as if to run ; his lips were blanched.

"Do not mind, sir ; it will be only for a few minutes. It is the usual evening salute of the enemy to our reliefs. Look out ! here is a big fellow !"

The Prince grovelled in the dust as a thirty-two pounder ploughed up a furrow and nestled in the hill-side.

My servant came down the slope at the same moment, and handed me a pass.

"Here's the order, sir ; and the General says you'll be responsible for your friend, as you've sent up no name."

The Prince rose, with quivering lips and an evil look, rather ashamed of himself.

"By the bye, sir—or I should say, I presume, your Highness—I have not the honour of knowing your name ; will you oblige me ? I can fill in the order in pencil."

"Azimoolah Khan," he replied. "I am scarcely what you call a prince, but Europeans style me so in my own country."

"My servant will show you the way down to the first parallel, Prince ; and any officer on duty to whom you show the pass will give you every assistance and information. You will be sure to find my hut if you make your way back to Cathcart's Hill ; and bed and supper if I should not be back when you return."

I went on my way to dinner. On my return, about eleven o'clock, my servant was waiting for my pony at the hut.

"The Prince wouldn't go to the trenches, sir. He said he had seen quite enough; and he's drank a bottle of our brandy a'most, and is tumbled into your bed, sir."

When I awoke from my sleep in a camp-chair next morning the Prince was gone. He rose soon after daybreak, and rode back to the harbour. On my table there was a note in a feminine hand:—

"Prince Azimoolah Khan's compliments to Dr. Brady for kindness of attention. The Prince was as anxious to see Dr. Brady as he was the works of those great enemies whom the British and French cannot subdue. Events and Fate—who can then withstand them?—probably decree Dr. Brady must come to India. It would be well if he came soon. Why should he not leave an army destined to swift destruction? There are rich patrons of arts and medicine in India. *Dr. Brady may have friends whom he would like to see there.* If you come at any time inquire for me of Mohun, Bunneah of Cawnpore bazaar, whose name is well known, and show him this note, and to no other. I had more to say, but must get my ship, who sail early. Sir, believe me your friend,

"HIGHNESS AZIMOOLAH KHAN."

I started a little at the words underlined "*Dr. Brady may have friends whom he would like to see there;*" but next moment thought no more of the matter, and only laughed at the Prince's evident dislike to a near approach to the enemy after the specimen of their far-reaching aims, little imagining I should ever see him again.

To me, Quarries, the Redan, the Rifle-pits, the long labour of the trenches, brought but multiplied cares, anxieties, and loss of friends. The dear old friends—old, for in the life of camps friendships grow quickly—were dying out. Day after day I filled up the tabulated reports in which Death marshalled his columns and dressed out his array of battle. In the midst of all this dreadful monotony I heard by each mail how all were trembling at home for us, and how the heart of the country was out with us on that plateau. At last the drama drew to its close.

It was the day after the second assault on the city. Sebastopol had fallen, but we knew it not. All night long, and far into the morning, the very earth trembled under our feet, and the sky was scarred by the furnace blasts as fort, battery, and magazine were

tossed into air by the sullen enemy and the flames leaped from house to house, so that the dawn was paled by the glare of conflagration. As the sun set, the French clarions sounded a loud flourish from the Malakoff, to celebrate the repulse of the last column of the white-capped Russians. But we felt no pride in their triumph, and could only think of those who lay stark and stiff in the ditch of the Redan. I was kneeling beside the blanket on which my old friend Hood lay beyond all human aid.

The *Gazette* had come in ; he was promoted major-general for service in the field. He was K.C.B.

"I knew I would beat him," he muttered. "But, Brady, I never can live to find out who he is. That accursed deserter and traitor whom I have twice crossed swords with has escaped. Well, my dear lad ! Major-General and K.C.B., and the widow will be Lady Hood ! But I'll not trouble them much for the pay. Oh, 'tis as well I should die, sir ! I wish I had died long ago—that this steel had found me the morning I got my boys together for the last dash into the ravine at Inkerman to recover our guns. Why were there no supports ? I tell you"—he tried to raise himself on his elbow. "Don't stop me. Tell that confounded newspaper fellow, whom you know, that it's true, as I'm a dying man—let him print it, and put my name to it—we lost the Redan because we were not supported. The Tigers held it, sir, on the left ; there were the Greens and Slashers and all the Brigade on the right ; but we were mowed down in groups, and left to be—why, murdered, by Heaven ! I saw the Ruskies gathering for their charge, and I looked for help in vain. My poor dear boys !—how they fought ! But it was hopeless. I tried to keep them together behind a traverse, but they fell in files, and the enemy made a sudden swoop on us and drove us out. Yes, by Heaven ! they ventured to level bayonets with us. A bullet-headed giant beat down my guard, and gave me what you know you cannot cure, just as that scoundrel with a red scar on his cheek called out to me, in good English, 'Surrender, you fool !—surrender !' I believe it was the effort I made to punish his insolence which enabled the men to rally and carry me off. What use ?—what use ? I might as well have died as I lay !"

And, for all I could do, that was true.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TWO WARRANTS OF EXECUTION.

I KNEW for a long time past that Mary Butler was to be Gerald Desmond's wife ; yet somehow I evaded the fact. I passed it by hurriedly, as a horse shies past an object in the dark.

It was unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. But I would not face the fence. I could not. I might be spared the torture of seeing it. I might die by some happy chance ere it occurred. Never did I allow the thought to linger—"Perhaps he may fall."

But the time of my great trial was approaching. Two letters which I received after the south side of Sebastopol was evacuated tell their own story. I believe no prisoner ever read his death warrant with less hope of a reprieve, or walked to the block more calmly than I did.

The first was from Sir Denis. It ran thus :—

"Oriental Club, Sept. '54.

"DEAR TERENCE,—You will understand the imperative reasons which render it necessary that my niece and Gerald should be married as soon as he is sufficiently recovered from his wound. I find it impossible to reject the handsome offer which has been made to me of an important post in India, and I could not enter upon my duties till I had seen her settled. There is every probability of peace very speedily, and Gerald can then retire from the army and live at Kilmoyle on all that can be rescued from the ruin of the property. You will not be surprised at a step which has been so long, as you are aware, the settled object of my life ; but I am too well aware of your feelings to withhold from you the expression of my sympathy : and I tell you candidly that if Mary had given me the least cause for supposing she did not feel as I wished her to do, she would have been permitted to follow her inclinations, however pained I must have been at her decision. As I told you before, the connection between the two families has been disastrous on more than one occasion, and you must be aware your own position would not justify you in marrying Mary were she averse to the union with her cousin and not indifferent to you. As the case stands, you must only summon up your courage and bear what must be borne with fortitude. You have kept your secret nobly, and I appreciate your self-control and your conduct as they deserve, though you must not be offended if, in thanking

you, I let you see I am aware of your real sentiments. *Miser ego miseris miserere disco*. In the arrangements I made of the property I have considered it right, knowing how you are circumstanced and the influence this marriage will exercise on you, to give you a rent-charge on the lands of Tullymore, which Mr. Bates and my lawyer have settled, and Gerald will, I have no doubt, give his consent to the proposal. We have modified the old settlements, and by the sacrifice of more than one-half of the estate, which will be disposed of in the Encumbered Estates Court this month, I hope to place Kilmoyle on a fair footing, though the rental will force Gerald and his wife to exercise a rigid economy, and to place their establishment for some years to come on a very modest scale. We sail for Malta next month, on our way to Constantinople, as it may be desirable for Gerald and Mary to stay abroad for a few months after the wedding, so as to avoid our severe winter. She is not looking very well, and I fancy her anxiety about Gerald has been preying on her, but the last accounts cheered us greatly, as, although he was only returned as 'wounded' we did not know whether it was slightly or dangerously till we received his letter. I shall proceed to India as soon as I have seen the young people settled.

"You will be pleased, if you do not know it already, to hear Mr. Bates and Major Turnbull will accompany us to the East from Malta. The old man wishes to see you: he has some papers requiring your signature, and he has been informed that your regiment, in the event of peace being signed, and the army being broken up, will probably be sent to the Cape. The gratification I should have experienced in informing you that intelligence has at last reached us of Miss Fraser is much lessened, if indeed it be not completely neutralized, by the circumstances in which she is placed. My niece has received a letter from her, many months old, of a very unsatisfactory and painful character. It is almost incredible what she relates. It was her father who carried her off the night the Castle was attacked, and who now keeps her in a melancholy seclusion in the court of a petty chief beyond our jurisdiction, where he has taken service.

"That daring and desperate reprobate, whose life I believe is forfeit here and in India, was the leader in the attack on the Castle. She was aware of his presence in the neighbourhood. He with inconceivable audacity—from what I know of him quite foreign to his character—actually made his way into my house and terrified the poor girl out of her senses, but she had the courage to resist his attempts to induce her to steal my keys. Her love for the wretch induced her to screen him. He worked so on her

feelings by his threats of violence, and by the picture he drew of his death on the gallows, that she kept his secret and the oath the rascal made her swear. When she fled from the room into which his band were breaking, she ran down the passage to the kitchen and was suddenly seized by her father and a man who forced the door you had been guarding. At that moment one of their scouts announced that the police were coming. Fraser put the poor girl on a horse, and managed, as we know, to get clear off with her. Indeed, I know not what power we could have had to take her from him. Her attachment to such a worthless father is one of the singular points in her character, and it is only equalled by her dread of, and aversion to, Mrs. Brady. Fraser and your mother bitterly hate each other; it must be a hallucination of Miss Fraser that your mother was at Kilmoyle, and that her father and mother-in-law were engaged in plots and counter-plots under the very walls of the Castle. When I go to India one of my first acts will be to bring pressure to bear on the fellow to surrender his daughter if she wishes to come; and indeed, but for her sake and for yours, it would be my duty to call to account two persons who have committed such atrocious acts as the pair in question.

* * * * *

“Yours with sincerity and regard,
“DENIS DESMOND.”

When I received this letter, I sat down and penned a short reply, in which, without alluding to Sir Denis's remarks concerning my sentiments towards Miss Butler, I thanked him for his kindly expressions; declining, however, most positively his proposed settlement of a rent-charge upon me, and assuring him of my humble regard and respect. By the same post I wrote to Mary Butler, and her answer came in due course. It ran thus:—

“London, October 2, '54.

“MY DEAR TERENCE,—Your kind and affectionate letter of congratulation was very welcome to me, and I read part of it to my uncle, who seemed agreeably surprised by the exceeding pleasure you expressed. But he does not know the warmth of your heart as well as I do. Nor the strength of our friendship since we were children together, though so many years separated us till lately. And you have been so tender and watchful of Gerald. How can we ever show our sense of it? He writes only a few lines, and those not always very cheerful, but it is not to be expected that the poor wounded fellow could be very full of spirits. I was quite surprised not to hear you have met Miss

Prendergast, or, as we ought to call her, Sister Rose, although she has not taken the veil. Her last letter informed us of her having gone to the East, to act as a nurse, and I almost envied, though I could not imitate her. There is a French army chaplain, a Père de Lancey, some relation of her family, out at Scutari, who will look after her. The dear girl seemed to think she wronged me some way, and was most anxious for an assurance of my forgiveness of a great wrong, which I must learn some day. As if she could commit a wrong towards me, or any human being ! When you see her, give her my love, and tell her I am quite sure I may safely promise to forgive her any offence she can ever be guilty of. And now, dear Terence, let me, in conclusion, beg of you to discard that gloomy view you take of yourself, and the world around you. Are you not very dear to us all, and have you not deserved our gratitude ? My uncle speaks of you in the highest terms. He has influential friends, even if you needed any aid to your acknowledged merits, to aid you in your profession. We must all make some sacrifices in this world to our duty, as you and I well know. Ever since I was a child I have been almost a nurse or a dependent, and I have learnt to accept my lot. The society—the dances, the balls, and the little amusements in which girls delight, and in which I do not mean to say I should not have taken as much interest as others, have been denied to me. I have been shut up in a big house in London, with my aunt, her dogs, her cats, and her rheumatism, or taken out to dismal dinners, which I abhorred ; or I have been carried off to watering places, where I was made a walkingstick. Then came my hurrying to and fro with poor dear uncle Richard, whose companions were seldom profitable or agreeable. My uncle Denis has done much to educate me. He has made me his confidante, his secretary, his woman of business, and his friend, and in all these capacities I have learned to know how much he esteems you, and to respect him, in spite of his hardness. Reckon on us all—on me, dear Terence, and although I will not ask you to confide to me the cause of your sorrow, be assured of my deep sympathy and of my earnest desire and hope that it will soon, very soon, pass away. I feel how much you have had to embitter your days ; and I pray to God that your last trial may have come now, and that you may enjoy many a year to come, in the consciousness that your happiness is dear to so many friends ; and that among them, to none can it be dearer than to your oldest friend of all,

“ MARY BUTLER.”

I could have accepted my fate more easily if it were not so manifest the writers of the warrants knew the blow would so pain me.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CONFESSION.

SOME weeks' time after the city fell, I was ordered to go down to Scutari with a detail of wounded and sick. By day and by night wounded and sick were my companions. And now, as the best record of what happened, I shall take a few pages out of my diary, omitting trivial and unimportant details, and dealing only with the matters which affect my own story.

"*October 21st, 1855.*—Deaths fourteen. *Orinoco* arrived, with sick and wounded. The new wards quite filled. The Sisters of Charity active, and I must say useful, though I should not like Blossom to know I thought so. I fancy I have seen one of them before; I must try to get a good look at her to-morrow. She turned away, and pulled down her veil, as I was attracted by a slight exclamation from her when I entered the ward.

"*Oct. 22nd.*—The ways of Heaven are indeed wonderful. Who would credit what happened last night if he read it in a novel? and yet it is true, every word. I was passing down the ward with Tice, my dear good chief, when the nurse at one of the beds touched me on the elbow, and said, 'This case has been put into this ward by Dr. Janson, sir; but I thinks it's a mistake. The case seems to me a dying, sir.'

"The nurse was not quite right—the man was apparently sinking fast—a bad wound suppurating, and a fever running to delirium, presented unfavourable symptoms. I gave him stimulants, and he opened his eyes. He called out all at once, 'Miss Rose! O, Miss Rose, darlin'! Is that you?' Turning in the direction of his gaze, there was my Sister of Charity, Rose Prendergast, standing behind me! I started to my feet, but she made no effort to unfold her hands, which were locked on her breast.

"'Do you not know me?' I exclaimed. 'I, your brother's friend, Terence Brady, whom you nursed not so long ago?'

"'Yes!' she replied; 'I know you perfectly. I saw you yesterday, and no doubt I shall meet you again, for I am attached to this hospital. See, Dr. Brady, the man has

fainted. It is Macarthy, from Lough-na-Carra, your own old place.'

"'God bless Lough-na-Carra, and all that's in it!' moaned the soldier; 'and the Virgin watch you, Miss Rose, darlin', and all the saints of heaven! Ah! it was a drame, I suppose,' he muttered, opening his eyes, and looking round his cot. Rose had indeed vanished.

"'It's a drame, and a sign to me. And who are you, I wonder?'

"As he spoke there came on his face an ashy horror and fear beyond description; his eyes started, white, wide with terror! He crossed himself with trembling hands, 'Oh! Holy Mother of God!' he gasped, 'have mercy! Have you come to take me in my sins?'

"'My good man, compose yourself,' I whispered. 'I am the surgeon—Mr. Brady.'

"'Yes, that's the name—Terence Brady, of Lough-na-Carra. Ohone, and well I know—and well I know you; and it's a sign and a token to me, as you stand there by my bed-side, that the mercy of Heaven will never be shown to my sinful soul—no, not even if you forgive me.'

"'I forgive you what?'

"'Whist! Don't let them hear you. And don't you know? Tell me, Mr. Terence, you'll forgive me. You do know, and I'll hope. I'll hope, your honour—though I've been a bad man, and have done you, oh, great wrong, sir.'

"There was in the tones of his trembling voice something which reminded me of one I had heard before; but I could not recognize his swarthy face, which now was agitated and clammy with terror.

"'She's gone,' he said, looking round the room. 'She's gone, and I can aise my mind; but if she knew, she'd never forgive me it, though God knows 'twas not my doing. Listen to me, sir, for my time's coming near, and I must quiet my conscience before the priest comes. I'm better, I think, at the thought of confessing it all to you; but it's a wonderful thing to see you there sitting by my side in this strange place—I that was your enemy—and to have you looking after me, and watching by me; and Miss Rose not far off.'

"He crossed himself again, and muttered uneasily with closed eyes.

"I felt his pulse—it was feeble and quick, but there was no immediate danger. I was accustomed to the ravings of sick and wounded men, and but for his recognition of my name, and

his agitation when he spoke to me, I should have paid little attention to what he said.

"The man by whose bed I stood was in a precarious state. His life was in the balance. Promising to return to him soon, and assuring him if he remained quiet and obeyed orders he would have a fair chance of recovering, I directed the orderly to look after him closely, and went through the wards in search of Rose Prendergast. None of her sisterhood, who were busy in their labours of love, knew her by that name, but at last I met her in a corridor. She spoke with great reluctance of our friends.

"'It distracts us from our present duties to dwell on the outer world. Here is my world,' she sighed, 'I only live for one object.'

"'And your brother?' I inquired. 'I am most anxious to know where he is, because I have a singular idea I saw him in the Crimea. The whole army knows of an Englishman with a scar on his face who is foremost in every attack on us. He was as near to me one night as you are now, and if I be right, blew up the magazine.'

"'I declare I do not know whether poor Maurice is alive or dead now,' answered Rose, 'I have not heard from him for some time. But, alas! it may be as you say—he is out of his senses, and I have suffered from his violence—me, whom he so dearly loves and yet abandons, as you see.'

"'It were best, then, you never see him again, I think. It's hard to say so of my old friend, but he is beyond pity.'

"Rose said not a word. Her hands were crossed on her heart, on her left hand she wore a black glove.

"'How long have you been here?' I went on—'I wonder you did not write to me, for Auld Lang Syne sake?'

"'I have been here several weeks now—six or seven; and before that I was at Buyukdereh.'

"'At Buyukdereh! Did you see Gerald—I beg pardon, Major Desmond—there?'

"There was a slight quiver of her lip and eyelid and a faint flush on her cheek as she looked down and said, 'Yes! I did; I—I—attended him.'

"'What a lucky thing to have a friend near him, poor fellow! Miss Butler never told me of that, though Gerald writes her word of everything.'

"'Lucky, was it? I hope so, Mr. Brady! Major Desmond will be coming down soon, I suppose, now, won't he?'

"'No, I think not until the army moves or goes into winter quarters, if we have to spend another winter up there. Sir Denis

is anxious that the marriage should take place before he goes to India, and I think it not unlikely he will come here with Miss Butler and have the wedding over soon. Major Desmond cannot hope to get home now and cannot leave the service.'

"And you—how do you,' asked Rose, raising her eyes quickly to mine, 'like this marriage?'

"Whatever makes Miss Butler happy must always be welcome to me.'

"And do you really think Mary is much attached to her cousin?' said Rose, earnestly. 'Do you believe it would be a great shock to her if Gerald—like you, I must beg pardon, and say Major Desmond—finding he did not love her, broke off the marriage?'

"I have never speculated on the subject. The marriage has been for some time decided on, as Sir Denis is satisfied he can trust his niece's happiness to her cousin.'

"Surely there never could have been a doubt about Gerald's good qualities,' exclaimed Rose, warmly; then, recovering herself, she continued—'at least as far as I know. And now as to Macarthy? I am very anxious about him. It was he who gave me the note which prevented the surprise planned by those desperate men, I handed you that night. And his father was old Dan, whom you and Mary played tricks on long ago.'

"His case was critical,' I replied, 'and required watchfulness and nursing.'

"Rose undertook the charge of him. I found her at his bedside always. Gradually the delirium passed away, the fever left him, and he gained strength.

"Macarthy wants to speak to you alone, sir,' said Rose, as I entered the ward one morning—she always addressed me so in the presence of others. 'He has something on his mind,' she whispered, 'and it will be a relief to him if you listen to what he has to say.'

"We were left together; the beds in the ward were nearly empty. After a while he began the narrative I write as nearly as possible in his own words. He spoke slowly but clearly, closing his eyes and pausing from time to time:—

"It is some eight years, your honour, since I ran off from Kilmoyle and enlisted in the artillery that was at Athlone. I was a smart boy enough, but was fond of a dhróp; and when we were sent out to Ingy I got worse and worse owing to the hate of the clim't, and it was nothing but cells and dhrills that I had, with the look-out of being flogged and turned out of the service. The bathry was quartered at a place called Cawnpore; on the Gauges

it is, and it's a divel of a place for dust, which made the thirst the worse on me. There was a nice fat little ould native kep a sort of grog-shop in the Bazaar, where some of the bad lot used to go—the dhrinking blackguard fellows of the redgments in Cawnpore. Mohun Lall; that was his name, and a good-nathered sort of man you'd think him, sure enough, for he'd let you run up a score, but when it got up to a month's pay or so you'd find the differ. One night just afore tattoo as we were laving, says Mohun to me—for he spoke English—'Stay for a minit, I want to spake to you.'

"'Oh!' says I, 'I haven't it now about me, but by Japers, I'll pay you next week, or my name's not Pat Macarthy.'

"'Don't mind that,' says Mohun, with a nod. 'I want a word with you alone.' And when the others were gone, says he, 'Didn't I hear you talking to that horse-soger of Kilmoyle—that's in Ireland, eh?'

"'And where the devil else would it be?' axed I, and very surprised I was to hear ould Mohun knew where it was, for the natives is the ignorantest people ever you seen. But if I didn't stare when he up and axed me about Sir Richard Desmond of the Castle, and Doctor Brady of Lough-na-Carra, and of Mr. Terence; oh, faith! he had them all off pat—all the people in the country he knew. 'Is it a witch you are, Mohun?' says I. 'May be,' says he, 'I am.' And then he gave me a lot of grog, and he axed me all sorts of questions about your honour, and what you were like, and so on, for I let him know I was Dan Macarthy's second son that lived man and boy on ould Doctor Brady's land at Coulbawn, and was fisherman to Lough-na-Carra. And when I was going, he says, 'Be sure you come soon agin, for I want to talk to you.' Bad luck to the day I ever clapped eyes on his black face and his black heart! When I got to barracks it was the ould story—I was late and dhrunk, and there was the cell at night and the orderly room in the morning, and the dhrills and stoppages in course, and it was some evenings afore I could get to the Bazaar again. Ould Mohun was glad to see me, indeed and he was, and guv me as much dhrink and more than I could carry. And there was the punishment worse nor before! And out I come again, and to Mohun's agin, like a baste that I was, and got so dhrunk I couldn't stir. When I woke up with my head splitting from the rakee, I was in a sort of loft smothered up with mats, and the hate like a turf fire, and I could see the white spots of the sun on the wall. 'Lie quiet,' says old Mohun, 'or you'll be tuk. The guard's been afther you, and you'll be taken for a deserter,' says he. I had been a day and a night and part of next day lying there with no more life nor siuse in me than a stone. Wait a while,

your honour, and you'll see what's coming of this. When the night came Mohun says to me, 'If you mind yourself now, you may be a rich man. Come along wid me now, and I'll save you from flogging, and I'll forgive you all you owe me, and make your fortune if you do as you're told.' Oh, and it was the ideya of the lash that used to drive me mad with fear, and I knew it was coming, coming, coming, and when I thought of the bleeding backs and the scored flesh and the staring eyes of the boys I had seen get it, I made up my mind that as long as I could get a firelock or a bayonet a bit of their whipcord should never cut my live skin. The ould rascal made me strip and put on a native dress, and into a litter I gets, and he gets into another, and off we set through the town with a troop of bearers and a lantern in great state, for Mohun was a rich ould man, and, besides keeping the dhrink on the sly, sold all sorts of things and had great shops, and was what they call a Bunneah as well. We jogged along till at last we got into a mighty quare sort of court-yard surrounded by high walls, and looking for all the world like a gaol. A doubt came over me for a minit, and I put my hand to my bayonet, but of course it wasn't there, and says I to myself, 'I'm done!' 'Now,' says Mohun, 'follow me, and come along;' and up he goes a staircase to a verandah, and walks along with me by his side. Except the barking of the dogs and the yooing of the jackals that does always lie about, I heard nothing at first; but as we were walking on the verandah, there was a sort of music, like the natives', going on somewhere; and indeed they never stops at it. Such music! Oh, holy Biddy! If Flannigan, the piper at Liscadill, heard it, he'd bust his pipes and die on the spot with disgust, so he would. But as I was saying, there was music and singing going on somewhere, and Mohun says, 'Wait here till I call you,' says he; and he shuffles off his slippers as they do when they're going into a room where there's greater people nor themselves, and went in at a door, and the music came out strong for a minnit till the door shut, and then it stopped altogether. I'm coming to the point, your honner, indeed, if you'll have patience with me. 'Come along,' says Mohun, at last, 'and mind how you behave yourself, for you're going to see a great man entirely, and if ever you let a word pass your lips'—the ould blackguard drew his finger across his wrinkled ould throat, where he ought to have had a rope round it—'Go in,' says he; and he raises a curtain, pushes open the door! And, oh Mother of Mercy! If ever I saw such a sight! There was the beautifullest room ever you laid eyes on—a blazin' with candles and lamps on the walls and hanging down from the ceilings; and there was wherever you turned nothing but looking-

glasses on the walls and gold frames ; and there was scented rushes on the floors and patches of elegant carpets ; and there was silver stools and chairs and tables, and a big table in the middle that was covered with gold and silver vessels and dishes and plates, and fruit and sweetmeats and wine ; and there was a lot of little vessels burning beautiful smells out of them. Well, I was that stunned and speechless, I turned round for the door, but it was closed, and Mohun was gone. I couldn't see out of my eyes for the blaze there was, coming so sudden after the dark, and you may imagine how I hopped when I heard my name in a voice as if it was an angel was whispering, but quite plain, 'Macarthy,' says she, 'look up, and let me see your face.'

"The lady was seated on a sort of a sofa they call it, all covered with iligant stuff, but of all the things in the room there was nothing could compare with what I laid my eyes on. There was flowers on her head just resting on her hair, that was flowing all round her—oh, mulliaun ! mulliaun ! Such hair I never seen afore or since, nor anything that ever grew on a head—only a picture once I saw Father Tom had of a lady reading with a skull alongside of her, and she with mighty little clothes on her—no flax nor silk that ever was spun could match it ; but when you saw the eyes she had, oh, Mr. Terence ! if you seen her once you'd do her bidding you would, if you knew your life, ay, or your soul, was lost the next minit. Don't shake so, your honour. I'm telling you the truth. She was smoking an iligant little pipe, and I think her ladyship had taken some of the wine that was on the table, for her cheeks was a little rosy, which made her look all the lovelier, and when the smoke she puffed out cleared away and I found myself standing with my mouth wide open, the sweetest smile ever you seen came over her face. She was as bright as the sky in Heaven, with diamonds and all sorts of jewels, and there was a loose gound on her, and she wore breeches made of silver stuff, as the natives do, but the lady was not a nigger, you may be sure of that. She was a little stout I thought, for her neck and arms was round and whiter than anything I ever saw.

"How old are you,' says she, 'Macarthy ?'

"Going on twenty-one, your Royal Highness,' says I.

"I'm not a Royal Highness, Macarthy,' says she, with another smile. 'Come over here, I want to speak to you.'

"Yes, your Majesty,' says I, this time. I crept over a pace or two with a thremble in my knees.

"Nor Majesty either,' says she ; 'it's not convanient to give me such names. You must not speak of me to any one till I give you leave. Come nearer still, and sit down there'—she pointed

to a silver stool not far off from her, and as I was sitting down something purred under the sofa, and I saw a pair of big eyes fixed on me. 'Don't be afeard,' says her ladyship, 'it won't hurt you ;' and she says something, and out slipt from under the sofa a panther, wagging its tail and catching up the carpet in its claws, and purring like fifty tom cats all at onst—and it leapt up on the sofa and lay down at her feet, and put its great lump of a head, with whiskers a foot long, on her lap, and kept its eyes fixed on me all the time. 'Do you spake Hindostanee?' says she.

"'No, your ladyship,' says I, 'only jist enough to ax for a bite and a sup.'

"She clapped her hands, and in walks from under a curtain an elegant-looking young gentleman in a turban and white dress, with a dagger all over diamonds stuck in the shawl round his waist.

"'Azimoolah,' says her ladyship, and then talked low and quick to him in their lingo. He looked at me pretty sharp now and then, and listened to her, and they laughed together, I all the time wondering who she could be, and knowing its being against their religion to let a lady be seen with her face uncovered, I put it down she was some great English lady that was a little quare in her head, and that liked native habits, as some do. This Azimoolah was a handsome chap for a nigger—a copper-coloured lad, slim and straight, not very tall, but mighty supple as he moved, and he had a sharp look about him, and for all his fine clothes hadn't the air of a real gentleman ; for they're some of them among the niggers as I've seen, and no finer-mannered men, though they spit about and has other nasty tricks. In comes an ould servant presently, and brings me wine, and her ladyship makes me take it, though I swore to myself as I was coming along I'd stick to water for the rest of my life. She sends Azimoolah away ; and there, Mr. Terence, in a few minutes was this beautiful lady and myself sitting quite close together, so that I could feel her breath on my cheek, and presently she begins to talk of Lough-na-Carra and of the Desmonds of Kilmoyle, and she told me about the wrongs they done her—how she was a queen in Ingy, and was a lady in Ireland, and how the Desmonds had done her out of it all and drove her into hiding, but now she was going to be revenged and serve them all out. And then she goes on and says how she's persecuted here, and how she's enemies all about her, and wants a friend—brave, determined, and who would die at her bidding if need be—and says she, putting her hand on my shoulder, and looking—oh, merciful Father!—right with her two eyes into mine.

"'Will you,' says she, 'be that friend to me?'

"Ah, sir, how do I know what answer I made? I only remem-

ber that she held to my lips the Cross of Christ, and that I said after her, word for word, an oath that damned my poor soul ! Oh, there was a cruel smile on her fair face when I had done, and she held me out her hand and let me—no, but told me to kiss her fingers ; and rising, she went out of the room, with her baste of a panther purring by her side, and the curtain was raised up for her to pass. She turned and nodded to me twice or three times, and held her finger up, and went out from my sight, poor lost creature that I was ! Mohun came to tell me I was to remain in the palace, as it was called, and that I'd be well fed and paid, and after a time I'd be wanted to go back to Ireland to help the lady, who was, he said, once Ranees or queen of some State, but I was to keep that quiet. I didn't see her for days again, and I wasn't let go out of the place ; but I didn't wish to be pounced on for a deserther, and anyway was on the watch for a sight of the Queen again. At last, one day I was sent for by Azimoolah, who said I must darken my face and go in a litter to the town, as the lady—Mem-Sahib—wanted me. I put on the most elegant suit of clothes ever you seen, and a nigger made me as black as himself ; and with chuprassees with drawn swords by my side and scarlet liveries, there I went as proud as a peacock towards Cawnpore. I began to think the Queen must be in love with me, and the only thing made me doubt it was that she hadn't sent for me before. I was tuk into a mean sort of a house by the back way, and was shown upstairs. There was the Queen, as I called her to myself, waiting for me, and when I went in she beckons me over to the window where she was—a native window, with a mat before it that you could see through without being seen. It looked out on the parade-ground, where the dhrills used to be in the morning, and all the great sights took place, and there, sure enough, was my old bathry drawn up, and Captain Thunder, and that vagabone Sergeant Crick ; and there was a British cavalry regiment, and a native regiment of horse ; and there was a foot regiment of British, and another bathry. A great review it was, in honour of a mighty big civilian, as we call them in India—Mr. Desmond, a brother to Sir Richard of Kilmoyle, no less—that was coming through the place. There was a crowd of natives all round the lines.

“‘Now, Macarthy,’ says the lady, putting her hand on my shoulder quite familiar, but still so mighty stately and commanding, ‘you see the general out there with his staff? Well, he'll come over here to this flagstaff close at hand by-and-by, when they've done their tomfoolery up and down the lines, as if the faces and backs of soldiers wasn't always the same, and as if they ever

looked at them, or could see as they're galloping, if they did look,' says she. 'And there are two men that you must mark well, so that wherever and whenever you see either of them again you can know him as well as you know myself.'

"They came over, sure enough. There was the general, a fine ould man, with a red face, as most generals have in Ingy, and the staff officers, and on the right of the general there was a tall, good-looking man in a tight blue frock-coat and white trousers, with a low hat and a white puggree round it, on a fine horse. He had a great air with him, and all were paying attention to him, but he spoke only to the general. As he turned to talk I could see his face quite aisy, and so could the Queen; and if she had been a Queen I would not give much for the tall gentleman's life, judging by the way she looked at him.

"'Now,' says she, pinching her fingers into my shoulder without her knowing it, 'that's one of them—that is Mr. Denis Desmond, Commissioner of Auripore; never forget him as long as you live. It is not easy to do so; once I could have——'

"She stopped, and looked at him; and I couldn't help thinking her ladyship could be a very bad enemy if she was put to it.

"The march past was beginning. There was first the Lancers, and then came the natives in powder-blue and silver—mighty fine to look at.

"'Look well now at the man in front of that redgment.'

"The colonel was a tall, sickly-looking man, and wore a big black beard and moustache; he saluted with his sword as he came opposite the general, and Mr. Desmond gave him a kind of a nod as he passed, as much as to say, I know you, my man.

"'You see him? Do you know what redgment that is?'

"'I do not, my lady. It must have just come in.'

"'It is Fraser's Horse,' says she, 'and that's Colonel Fraser that you are looking at. He is the other I want you to mark.'

"She said no more, but sat and looked till the review was over. Then the governor and the general and the staff, and all the civilians and the ladies in their habits, and a great lot of officers, came past our window with the escort. There was a fat, pockmarked native prince in a carriage sated below us, that all the niggers were mighty civil to, and he had emeralds and diamonds enough on him to ransom a king, though he was a mean-looking fellow too. There was Azimoolah standing by his carriage-door, and a crowd in scarlet liveries and gold, with swords, and all the rest of it.

"When the general and governor were just going past, the lady says to me, 'Do you see them? Point me out Colonel Fraser.'

“‘There he is—next behind Mr. Desmond, off side.’

“‘Whisht!’ says she, and listened.

“There was the native, with his hands clasped together, saying something to Mr. Desmond, who reined up his horse and was hearkening to him quite haughty and contemptuous like. And when he answered, I saw the fat chap’s face grow yellow. Mr. Desmond didn’t say much, but whatever it was, it made all the niggers chatter; and then he gave his horse a touch of the spur, and cantered away with the general, and the officers and ladies laughing like anything, except Colonel Fraser, who said something to the prince, and followed after.

“To see the look the black fellow gave up to the window, and Azimoolah, too!

“‘Now you may go,’ says the lady. ‘Take care you’re not seen. I shall need you soon, and then will come your service and your reward.’ And the service came, sure enough. And I must shorten my story now I’ve told you how it was brought on to me. This Colonel Fraser that I saw was going to Ireland with his daughter, and I was to go aboard the same ship with him, and never lose sight of him. She feared this man, colonel as he was and fine gentleman, would do some mischief to her son by the first marriage—Mr. Terence Brady, and that is your honour’s self I’m spaking to, no less—for reasons he had, as well as to spite her, for there was a hate between them that there’s not the like of out of hell. ‘Only for that girl,’ the lady said, ‘he should never leave Ingy alive.’ And I believe her. So, as I knew you well—and many’s the question she axed about you, and seemed to take on that you never wrote to her—I was to watch, above all things, over everything that passed, if he went near your honour, and to look after you. ‘Mind your oath,’ says she; ‘and if a hair of his head is hurt, your life is the forfeit.’ I had plenty of money; clothes and all were found for me; and I left Calcutta in the ship with the colonel and his daughter. He had with him a rascal that had been turned out of the service as a bad character, and a set of low natives. I kept as close to myself as I could; but I managed to give the young lady a little parcel her ladyship sent, and glad she was to open it, the poor thing, and hide it inside her bosom. She was very fond of the colonel, I think; but he was a terrible man for the cards; and there was a lot of them did nothing but play morning, noon, and night, and when he lost, which was often enough, his temper was beyond bounds. There was, as I said, a gang of black blackguards he was bringing over, who were almost in a state of mutiny, as we’d call it, for want of their wages, which they were promised as soon as he

embarked, and more than once he went in and knocked down their head man—as ugly a chap as ever I seen, he was—one of their pulwawns, or wrestlers; a square, active chap. He could have broken the colonel's back in a minute, and had a way of hitting a man with an iron that had a knob on it like the end of a poker, which he always carried, that no guard could meet, and that sent him down like an ox. But the pulwawn daren't touch the colonel on board. If you could see him though, when he was watching the colonel, you would guess what he felt. I made great friends with the natives, for I would spend my money on sweets and butter, and the likes of that for them; but they were in the forecastle, and I was second-class, and Shorter watched me like a cat watching a mouse. That was the man the lady suspected, but the colonel and he never spoke a word while they were on board; but I could see Shorter was always on the watch when the young lady was on deck, and never let his eyes off her. Well, and it was a long voyage, but we came to London at last. I didn't know London, but I followed the colonel about like his shadow, and glad I was when he started for Dublin, and took up at Morrison's. For a week or more he kept very quiet; but Shorter was always loitering about, and I had enough to do to keep out of his way. There was a public-house I used to go to, in a lane nigh hand, and as I spent my money freely, I was a favourite with the customers; and at last I got in with a 'sheath,' as they called it, of the Sword boys, and took the engagement with them. One Slattery, a 'pothecary's boy, that had been, he said, in the American army, was one of our 'visitors.' We were all sworn to the Republic, and to drive the English Orangemen out of Ireland. They used to talk of you, and say Maurice Prendergast would gain you over; and others said he wouldn't. All this while the colonel never went near you, but Shorter was finding out what you did, and where you went to. One night, who should come into the 'Harp' but Shorter himself! He saw me at once, for I hadn't the beard on that I wore when I landed. Somehow he and Slattery was friends, and he was introduced to the Boys, and after a few sittings he took the oath as well. He and I got very thick, and I told him I had bought my discharge, and that I was aware he was a deserter, and that he was in my power. The colonel was getting in a bad way. He counted on having money from his relations, and he couldn't get a penny, and the heavier he played the more he lost. And, worse and worse, an ould Indian contractor that was over in England about some suit before the courts, heard where Fraser was, and arrived in Dublin to ask for £2,000 the colonel owed him, and swore he would prosecute him for forgery. It was

coming near the time of the rising that was to be, and I could scarcely keep myself from grinning in their faces when I heard them talking of the pikes they had, and their pistols and vitriol bottles. 'The pike's the queen of weapons!' they used to say, the poor creatures! Why, a good bathry would be a match for all the pikes in Ireland, if it was properly handled and supported, and that I knew well enough at all events. Shorter took me into his confidence complete, and I promised to help him and the pulwawn; but I never could get hold of a scrap of writing or any evidence agin him. He was an awful villain, sir. He let out that the colonel wished you put out of the way, and that he was willing to do the job. 'But then,' says he, 'it's not his money I'll want—it's that nate little daughter I'll have as well, and I'd like to see him refuse me when I've done his work.' This was the very thing I wanted to know; and I believe, clever as Shorter was, I done him from the outset. We bought a fast, light-pulling second-hand gig, and kept it in an old shed at a place called Ringsend, and at night we would dodge about the river or run over to Clontarf opposite, when there was a meeting of some of the Sword boys at Mr. Prendergast's, or elsewhere, and wait for orders. One morning, Shorter calls on my lodgings and says, 'Come along, we'll be wanted to-night, maybe.' And off we goes to the College, and we walks in as if we were strangers, which we were indeed, and saunters about; and by-and-by in walks the colonel to the square, and goes up a stair. We roved up and down looking about us by the way till he came down, and then Shorter walks past the doorway with me, and says:—

"'You see that name, T. Brady? He has paid the visit, and I'll hear what's to be done when I go back, by-and-by, but you must see the man in order that there will be no mistake.' I never let on I knew your honour at all to him. We waited till you came down, and crossed the court, and then Shorter pointed you out to me. That night we met at the Harp, and Shorter said that Rustum, the ould Indian Contractor, was going to a meeting of the Sword boys, at Mr. Prendergast's. They thought it was an Indian prince, no less, in Dublin, and one of Mr. Maurice's friends thought it would be a great stroke to enlist him, the poor little baste. 'And we must finish him,' says Shorter. 'I've told Ali to be at the boat-house.' And then he explained that we were to knock him on the head if we had a chance, carry him on board, and drop him over, with a stone or shot to his neck, in deep water. 'It will be a hundred pounds a piece, that it will.' It was a hard night—thunder and lightning as we pulled over. We beached the boat, and put over a grapnel

for fear of accidents, and took up our post near Mr. Maurice's house. It was a long watch, and we had to move away at times, for a policeman came by more than once, and there were some cars waiting for the people inside. At last, sure enough, out comes Rustum, not able to stand. But he was safe from us for all that. There was a covered car at the door, and a couple of young fellows put him in and got alongside of him, and off they drove, leaving us staring at each other. I thought we were going back to the boat, but says Shorter, with an oath, 'No! as we're out on business, let us try our luck. If any one comes by that isn't a Sword boy let us see what he's got about him. No flinching, my lads.' The pulwawn alone said, 'I don't want to rob.' Well, presently you came out and stood at the door, and I saw you quite plain, but Shorter had been drinking and couldn't make you out. You came right over towards us, and Shorter gave you the word. I hoped you would maybe give the right answer; anyway, in case it came to the worst, I was determined to shoot Shorter or the pulwawn, whoever was first upon you, and I kept my finger ready and watched them, but you fairly gave us the slip, and were off like a deer. 'It's that Brady!' exclaimed Shorter, 'the best luck of all! He's worth five hundred pounds to us.' We gave chase. I was always a pretty good runner, but I could not go so fast as the pulwawn, nor could he cover the ground in the style you did. Oh, it was well you had sinew and muscle in your long legs that night! Shorter, drunk and stout, soon gave in. I could see the pulwawn gaining on you. Again you put on steam and shot ahead, and I strained my best to get near enough to save your life. Once or twice I was near trying a shot on chance at Ali, but feared I might miss him and hit you. I was failing fast as we reached the bridge, and when I gained the top you were both far in front of me. I kept on as well as I could. I could scarce see, but I heard the tramp of feet, the sound of a car, and then a police rattle, then all was silent. I halted and listened. There was the noise of a man running towards me in a minnit, that made me jump. It was Ali. 'To the boat!' says he. 'There's two there!'

"He pointed back with his finger, struck two blows in the air with his iron, which whistled like a sword blade.

"'Mr. Brady! You villain,' says I, 'if you've touched him——'

"No. Not touch him—police wallah,' says Ali. 'Don't you hear? They've found them. Run!'

"We gained the boat, picking up Shorter on the way, who was furious with brandy. There was a bottle of spirits in the boat, and, as we pushed off, we passed it round, but the pulwawn would

not drink ; it was well he did not, for we never could have reached the shed only for him. We all three slept in the boat till morning. You know what news we heard when we woke. Well, sir, it was considered we ought to keep quiet, and it was not till I returned to India I heard from Ali how he had taken his revenge. 'It was a chance I could not lose. As the young Sahib leaped on the car, the Colonel, who beat me like a dog, stood just within reach of my arm. I felled him ; the police wallah, who was following, saw it, and tried to stop me, but I felled him too. My arm was weak, or they would never have spoken again.' That's what Ali said."

"Did Colonel Fraser employ Shorter to murder me? Do you mean to say, Macarthy, that Shorter told you so?" I asked slowly—with a stern resolve. I awaited his reply. "Answer me truly."

"I can't say, sir. Shorter was to watch you, and that night, though I doubt if he knew you were there at first, he did not care what he did.

"And where is Colonel Fraser now?"

"I don't know, sir, and that's the truth. The pulwawn got over to Liverpool, where he shipped for India. I met him in Cawnpore afterwards. Shorter got a situation, by a character the colonel gave him, in a house in Scotland, where the plate-chest grew so light he could carry it away with him. The Lady was very bitter on me when she heard I had not gone after the colonel. She cut off the money very sudden, and I was put to hard courses for livin'. But I got an order from her to go back to Ingy and money for my passage, and this time it was Lucknow she was in. Narrow escapes I had of being tuk up, and glad I was, after I had been hidin' a few months, when I got the word from the Lady to be off to Ireland once more. I was to go to Kilmoyle, and to report all the goings on in the Castle, and to observe Miss Fraser, who my Lady was mighty fond of, and then I was to have a pension. Sir Denis had tuk her out of regard for old times, and the Lady was overjoyed because she was away from her father. But he was wanting to get her back, and the only thing prevented him was the Lady swore she'd have him handed up to the Government out of the place he was hidin' in. Well, your honour, I tuk to the drink again when I come back, and got in with the Sword boys of Kilmoyle, or them that was the same.—And indeed there was plenty of them, for the place was the miserablest in Ireland, and Sir Denis, with his new-fangled ways, didn't mend matters. There was hopes of a great war agen England. Mr. Maurice, who had

been wandering in Amerikey and in the Ayste, came back ; but even his sister there, the darlin', didn't know it then. You may judge of the surprise I had one night, as we were at a Council-Chamber of State in the back parlour of Driscoll's shebeen, when in walked Colonel Fraser and Shorter ! They had the forms all regular and proper, and the Colonel tuk the chair, and all went on very pleasant as they were planning the best way of attacking the Castle, no less, till Mr. Maurice arrived.

" 'Money is the sinews of war,' says the Colonel ; 'and that tyrant has untold gold in his coffers ; he has arms too, and if we strike a blow under the very nose of the army that's just arrived it will be a great effect and strengthen the cause.'

"Mr. Maurice was clean agen it ; he said attacks on houses was no good, and the like. Mr. Maurice only cared for the ladies, I believe, or for one of them, at all events. I stood by him through thick and thin. But the Colonel, who went by the name of General Charles, carried the meeting clear agen him ; and the committee arranged it all for next night. When he found you were to be in the Castle that night, Mr. Maurice sent you warning, at all risks ; I was bound by my duty to the Lady to help you, but you were near spoiling all our plans, your honour, by not coming to us. You know the rest, sir, and the fire, and how it all ended. Glory be to God for it ! Amin ! "

"Where was General Charles that night ? "

"He was with the boys indeed, and it was he led them on. His heart and Shorter's was set on getting his daughter into his hands, and on having Sir Denis's money ; he had horses ready to carry her off, depending on her not wishing to say a word to get him into trouble. But as sure as you are sitting there, sir, if he's alive this minute, the Lady has beat him."

"The Lady ?—where was she when the attack took place ? "

"Oh, in Ireland, no less, and not far off ayther ! You may open your eyes, sir, as I did mine, but what will you say when I tell you she came to Kilmoyle ? She came over hot foot after the General ; he never suspected it, but there she was living in the ould man's cottage at Coolbaun ! And at night she would walk about like a sperret, and make me take her to the Castle grounds, and look out for Miss Fraser, or Miss Mary, or Sir Denis at the windows. She seen you the day the redgment marched in, and says she, quite to herself, 'What a fine fellow he is !' says she, 'very like his father.' And she seen Sir Denis and the young ladies in the carriage, and called Miss Mary a 'doll-faced beauty'—Lord forgive her !—and got in a rage when Captain Gerald began talking, and Miss Mab hung down her head. And oh, if

she wasn't in a rage when they told her of the attack, and how Miss Mab was gone, and that you had a blow on your head. When she heard you were well enough to go about agin the Lady went off with herself in a great hurry, for she had bad accounts from India. She gave me money enough, God knows ; but I was as I am and always will be, and I had to take to the old trade ; and here I am now, where I'm like to be not very long. You should have got that letter sooner—sooner, sir. Indeed you should."

* * * * *

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE SECRET MARRIAGE.

I NEED not dwell on the feelings which the story of the soldier Macarthy excited. There were many things explained by it which had been previously matters of doubt. But that my mother should have been at Kilmoyle—that Fraser should have become a burglar and a thief, a rebel and a murderer, passed belief! They were bitter enemies, but that he should desire to take my life for no other purpose than to inflict a wound on her, supposing she loved or cared for me, was incredible. And if Macarthy told the truth, she suspected Fraser of a design upon me which would most probably, if carried out, bring upon him an ignominious end, and which seemed to be opposed to the interests he might have in view and the use he might make of me in causing her annoyance. Macarthy was quite sure she had never seen Fraser at Kilmoyle, and that she did not know of his presence till after the attack had taken place and Mabel had been carried off. All he told me went to show the unhappy woman possessed some trace of natural affection. Was I not now loth to recognize it in one whose heart was the abode of such evil passions? She hated the wretch who had been the partner of her crimes. She hated Sir Denis with an intensity quite devilish ; in that Fraser and she were agreed. And yet they both place themselves within reach of a man who had every advantage on his side, and expose themselves to almost certain detection ! True, they had escaped. But what were the chances against them when they came to a strange country—they, marked in manners and speech, ignorant of all around them—and trusted perforce their secret to many accomplices whose position laid them open to temptation? It could not be that Maurice

Prendergast exerted his influence to cause the secret to be preserved, for he it was who warned me against the plot to rob and murder the inmates of the Castle, which no doubt was Fraser's conception? Maurice must be lost indeed if he became privy to such atrocious crimes; as yet it was plain he had done nothing to aid in bringing the criminals to justice, when a few lines of an anonymous letter would have caused their apprehension. What my miserable mother's motives in coming to Kilmoyle were it was not possible to fathom. Brooding over the matter, I felt just a ray of hope that something of the human being, of the woman, was yet left in her breast, that her son's voice and entreaties might soften her heart and induce her to end her days in peace and penitence. I did not care to inquire into the causes of Macarthy's entreaties for forgiveness. He was her poor ignorant emissary, and I feared to come on a confession of an intended villainy which would destroy my hopes and put out the feeble spark which was left still burning in token of my once ardent love.

In a few weeks after my arrival at Scutari I was ordered back to the Crimea. Among the letters which awaited me was one from Standish, written in ignorance of my absence at Scutari, and asking me to come to his quarters when I had leisure. It was some days after the assault of September 8th and the occupation of the south side. Another of a later date was accompanied by a note from a surgeon, my Gallipoli acquaintance, Hugh Callaghan, to beg of me to come quickly.

"I urged Mr. Standish to go home or seek change of air when these symptoms first appeared, but he persisted in remaining here, and I cannot conceal my apprehensions that if he does so," &c.

I galloped over to the little hut, and when a husky voice said, "Come in," I was shocked at the change; Standish was ill indeed. He sat at his little desk writing. His wasted hand, his thin cheek, the hectic flush on his face, and the bright glaze of his eye, told the tale—he was in great danger and the winter was killing him.

I implored him to return home at once; at least to leave the camp till the weather became milder.

But he was calmly obstinate.

"It cannot be, my dear friend," he replied to my renewed entreaties. "This is my post. I am a soldier of the pen, and here I am on guard—

"Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed——"

here I stick, nevertheless ; and if Death comes he shall find me with my pen and my note-book in my hand. I have no urgent private affairs to attend to which could be improved by my going home ; and the little woman and the bairns will be better by my dying than by my living, though I wouldn't tell her so. Of course I should like to see *her* again and to look on *their* innocent faces, but if I am to go, the pleasure would be dearly purchased by her pain. As old Isaac Walton says, 'every misery I miss is a new blessing.' We have both been behind the scenes, Terence ! You have seen the work of war, and I have learned to know how heroes are made, and can tell how far the feathers and harness go. And we must both do our duty like any warrior of them all, and face the conqueror if he comes, though neither honour nor praise await our memories, content with—

“‘One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas.’”

And in that faith, and in the better faith which concerns itself not with mortal praise he died.

Whilst diplomatists and congresses were protocolling and treaty-making the months passed with leaden wings on the plateau, and men went on obstinately dying. Gerald Desmond, who on his return from the Bosphorus had been sent to Kertch, received another wound in a skirmish with the Russian cavalry. It was not dangerous, but it rendered him unfit for duty. He was obliged to leave Kertch, and lie up in the Sanitarium. I saw him as often as my duties in hospital would permit—oftener indeed than he seemed inclined to receive me. His wound did not heal kindly, but he refused to go down to Scutari. Once when I reminded him of his approaching marriage, he answered with something of his old contemptuous manner, which reddened my cheek with anger, What business was it of mine ?—What, indeed ? The diplomatists and congresses came to an understanding at last, and whilst they were dressing their articles, we were amusing ourselves with blowing up the Russian docks ; the French were practising with bombs and rockets on the opposite side of the harbour, and the enemy were preparing for what never took place. Another campaign. As the war was over our army was in capital condition for war. But Mouravieff was on the other side, and——

“Oh dear, and oh dear, your honour,” demanded my faithful Malony, “an’ is it thrue what they tell me, that the peace has broken out on us ?”

“Yes, Malony. It is quite certain. We must evacuate this as soon as possible.”

"Is it lave it, your honour?" inquired Malony, with an incredulous face—"lave *this* place we're in this minnit?"

"Certainly. We've destroyed the south side, and we must surrender the ground to the owners."

"Eyah? An' it's myself can't understand what the divil ever we come for thin! That's a purty peace to come and rob us this way."

With the peace came also the near approach of the event for which I had been "case-hardening" my heart for many a month. The "Peace had broken out" upon me also. My regiment was about to leave for Malta *en route* to the Cape, but I could not evade the cruel kindness that insisted on my being present at the sacrifice.

It was to be our last week in Balaclava. I rose early, and went about my duties in the hospital. The sea was dotted with white-sailed ships, and the sky was streaked with the smoke of the steamers, bearing away east and west, north and south, the fragments of the host which had so long peopled the plateau and the now woodless glades around. I clambered from the toiling crowd on the quay to my little hut, perched among the crags crowned by the old Genoese forts, which frown on the waves hundreds of feet below, and watch the narrow entrance of the fiord. By the way there is a patch of ground, studded with wooden crosses and a few stone pillars and tablets fenced in by a wall of turf from the encroaching vines. I entered by the little wicket. A woman dressed in deep mourning was kneeling before a marble slab, clearing away the weeds from the flowers which had sprung up luxuriantly, and two little children by her side, silently and wonderingly regarded her, as the tears stole down her cheeks.

"Don't cry so, mamma! We will pluck the flowers for you; won't we, Stapley, dear?"

And the little maiden, raising her eyes, caught sight of me and exclaimed, "Oh, mamma! here's the dear young doctor! He will soon cure you, and bring back papa to us."

On the slab before which the widow knelt was inscribed:

"In memory of Staples Standish, of the Inner Temple, who died in the Camp before Sebastopol on 1st January, 1856, aged 27 years.

"Here feel we but the penalty of Adam."

It was my last duty to poor Standish to erect that humble memorial.

The words beneath were almost the last he spoke.

I led the widow forth and her little ones.

"Your husband was my first friend, when I cast myself adrift

on the world, dear madam ; if you and your children need my humble help, depend on me as long as I live.* The good lady nurse will be leaving to-morrow ; and she will be at my hut in a few minutes to make arrangements for your voyage home. These sad weeks have done your health much injury ; remember you have his children to look after."

And when I was alone I prayed for the fortitude I so much needed : *my* bitter trial was to come.

I dressed myself with care in my old uniform, tried a cheerful smile for effect before my triangular piece of looking-glass, which may have reflected an uglier countenance in the Russian villa whence it was taken—not by me—and set forth on my way back to the harbour. It was a wonderful scene to look down upon !—the decks swarming with soldiers and sailors ; the strings of carts and mules and horses on the quays, the long lines of horsemen and footmen streaming away to and from the plateau, and tapering off into mere specks of colour on the hills ; on the ear came the hum of voices and a confused sound of rolling shot and empty barrels, and trundling barrows, and creaking blocks, the sailors' "heave away !" and choruses as they swung on board the cargoes. Near the mouth of the harbour lay the *Anaxandrown*, John Window, Esq., C.B., Captain. A snow-white canopy covered her quarter-deck, and dingier canvases protected her crew from the blistering sun. A new ensign drooped from her peak, every spar was squared to a line, and every rope drawn strict, "like mathematics," as my hospital sergeant would say. Her white streak has been repainted, and altogether the *Anaxandrown* looked like what she was, a smart ship with a smart captain. As I make my way down the zigzag path, startling the fat little quails among the vines, a gun shakes the old wall, and the echoes roll thundering away along the cliffs, awakening familiar sounds which have been silent for weeks past. It is a signal to a small steamer with French colours, heading directly for the crowded harbour, to lie-to outside till the senior naval officer shall permit her to enter. There is an animated conversation in flags between the Frenchman out at sea, which seems to be a Government despatch boat, and the signalmen at the tower, in which I take not the smallest interest. Very much astonished indeed should I have been to be told that these bits of coloured bunting going up and down had a most important bearing on my destiny for life. But so it was.

I got into the boat which was awaiting me, and as the Maltese pulled under the stern of the *Anaxandrown*, there was Jack Window in full dress—epaulettes, white waistcoat, broad red ribbon, and all, shaking his telescope at me over the taffrail.

"Mind, don't be late, you terrible medicine-man! we're all waiting for your Major, and there will be no fun till he comes. There goes Brady, Sir Denis, for his patient. We must clear decks."

And Sir Denis popped his head over the bulwark and waved his hand to me!—there was just a flash of something white in the stern window, like a handkerchief, as the boat whisked in between cables and hawsers, stems and sterns, and pulled for the opposite landing-place.

Gerald Desmond, in full dress, was waiting to receive me at the Sanitarium. He was seated on the bench in the shade in such deep thought he did not notice me till my shadow fell across the ground at his feet.

"Hallo!" he said, "is that you, Terence? What a hurry you are in!"

"We shall be late, Desmond. It's to take place at eleven o'clock, you know, and it's now past ten o'clock—a quarter, by *Anaxandrown* time. Come along."

"I feel so deuced unwell," he sighed; "I wish they could put it off. But no—what must be done must be done. Give me your arm then, and here goes."

His leg was yet a little painful, and he leant heavily on me, as we made our way to the quay. He sighed again.

"Are you in pain?"

"Eh?—oh no! At least, that is—I'm not quite myself—I slept badly. Don't you think it is odd?"—he stopped to speak—"that Sir Denis is in such an infernal hurry? It's scarcely delicate—why couldn't he wait till I got back to England. 'Pon my soul it's not in good taste, to say the least of it."

"You ought to be the happiest man on God's earth, Desmond. But one thing I'm quite sure of, a word from you to her would very soon procure you a reprieve."

"Who talks of a reprieve, sir? By Heaven, Mr. Brady, you must take care of what you say. I thought I could speak to you without having my words twisted—you think I ought to be the happiest man in the world—oh! I dare say you do—I'm very much obliged to you for the homage you pay my future wife—very, sir! But keep the expression of it to yourself—I beg of you."

Gerald Desmond was shaking with passion, and his face was by no means that of a joyous bridegroom. Although I was stung by his sudden attack, I mastered my feelings (I had learnt the lesson in a hard school) and was silent, whilst he, no longer leaning on my arm, walked with the aid of his stick down towards the quay,

where a boat from the *Anaxandrown* was lying. "I've a d——d great mind," he muttered, "to put the whole thing off for a month—for a year if I like—for ever. Whose dog am I that I must be hunted up here and taken almost out of an hospital ward to be a bridegroom, and to marry a lady who doesn't care two straws——"

"Oh, Gerald!—oh! for God's sake, Major Desmond, don't say so!—respect yourself—reflect——"

"I know what I say—that old fellow there knows well he can cut me off, and I dare not refuse. My cousin is an angel, if you will. But, Terence, I swear to you she is too much of an angel for my taste—cold as that rock—never has a word of love for me escaped her lips! If I were well even——"

"Major Desmond," I said, "it is only twenty minutes to eleven o'clock. They are waving to us from the boat. If you like, I will go on board and tell them that you are too ill; Sir Denis and Miss Butler will, no doubt, come up to the Sanitarium at once to see you."

He made no remark, but hobbled stiffly on, and I, fully satisfied there was some cause at work to set him thus beside himself, in sore perplexity of mind, and in great grief and distress for her, walked alongside him, to give him my arm in case he stumbled. Something whispered to me, that as I valued her peace, I ought to tell her, if not Sir Denis, what I thought. But I suspected my own motives, and scouted the suggestion. And here is a man who, in a few moments, would stand by the side of Mary Butler, and in the eye of Heaven vow to love her!

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the coxswain touching his hat, "but the captain says you are to come aboard at once. The General's aboard already, and the ladies and the Chaplain. Where-ever is that darned Frenchman acoming to? Fend off there! bow!"

The boat passed just under the cutwater of the small French vessel which I had noticed outside, now forging ahead towards the quay.

At the gangway stood Captain Jack, Sir Denis, General Crookencre, Mr. Bates, Major Turnbull, and a few of Gerald's friends, in a great knot of congratulation and expectancy. We passed between the folds of two silk standards, which were stretched curtain-wise so as to screen the quarter-deck, which was covered in at top. Lady Crookencre, Lady Blossom, and the admiral's wife, were prepared for any amount of crying and sympathizing; the Rev. Egon Eden, stoutest of ecclesiastical Adonises, who had been practising poses before the extempore altar, was quite ready to begin.

"How pale Major Desmond looks!—why, you haven't made half a job of him," whispered Captain Jack. "But if he were dying, he ought to be made well at once by such a wife."

Sir Boldero Crookencre, a withered, courteous warrior, was struck by the pallor of his *ci-devant* aide-de-camp, and looked reproachfully at me, as though I were to blame for it. Old Turnbull, whose eyebrows and moustache had become quite black, and whose ringlets were glossy as the raven's wing (and of the same purplish hue), poked Gerald in the ribs, and swore he was the saddest dog he ever saw waiting for the noose. Dear old Bates, leaning on my arm, silently watched the uneasy bridegroom, who walked towards the ladies, grouped round the Rev. Eden, as if to escape the good-humoured bantering of Colonel Silliman, his best man, of Bob Williams, and of the other accessorial personages who were in the high spirits considered desirable on such occasions on the part of all outsiders.

Sir Denis appeared on deck with Mary Butler on his arm. She walked forth from her little crypt below in a simple white dress, and a white rose in her hair, more lovely in her grand simplicity, in my eyes at least, than any finery could make her. As her eyes met mine, she held out her hand to me with her own smile, not quite so radiant I thought as I had seen it in days gone by. I scarcely ventured to hold it for an instant, and it was gone—gone for ever. And in a moment more the words which rang out as the knell of all my hopes—my death sentence began.

The Rev. Ogon read the service as though he were quite satisfied that he was the bridegroom, and made the most out of every word, looking round to mark the effect of his attitudes and elocution on his auditory.

But he paused suddenly, for there was a loud sound of voices on the deck outside the flags.

"You can't go in, sir," said the marine outside the curtain; "you must wait."

"I tell you I must—I must see Sir Denis Desmond," responded a voice in a foreign accent.

We turned towards the screen; Jack Window strode angrily towards the scene of the altercation, Gerald Desmond clutched the altar, with a look of agony, as a man with the sentry's grasp upon his collar burst through the opening, exclaiming—"I must see the Commandant Desmond. Oh, Messieurs, God be praised! We are yet in time to prevent a great outrage!"

He was dressed as a Catholic priest, and on his breast was the star of the Legion of Honour. His look was fixed on Gerald.

"Ah, Monsieur Gerald! Heaven is very good to thee."

And shaking off the grasp of the doubting marine, he advanced towards the altar. Jack Window drew himself up, and raised his hand to bar his progress.

"May I ask, sir," he demanded, "why you force my sentry and intrude yourself on board my ship? You understand English, and decency too, I hope. If you have any business with me, or any one on board here, you must withdraw, sir, till the proper time comes."

Gerald Desmond's lips were white, his eyes closed, as if to shut out some horrid sight.

"Capitaine," continued the priest, "I understand English a little, and decency I hope more. Business, too, I have here on board; it is not difficult to say what it is. I am chaplain of the Brigade Jollivet, of the Second Army Corps; my name is De Lancey. I hear that the Commandant Gerald Desmond is going to marry himself to his cousin, Mademoiselle Butler, niece of Sir Denis Desmond; I am here to forbid that act, and to prohibit a grand crime."

"You, sir? By what right, and why?" asked Sir Denis. "How dare you?"

"Ah, sir, I dare do what it is right to do. Come here, my child, and justify me."

"Do you know this priest, Gerald?" asked Sir Denis. "What does this mean, sir?"

The priest opened the curtain, and there stood before us, wan and sad, Rose Prendergast!

"Oh, Gerald! darling Gerald?" she cried, "how could you wrong dear Mary so, and me? Mary, my own loved Mary, forgive, oh, forgive me? I am Gerald's wife."

"Yes, the Commandant Desmond's wife, gentlemen!" repeated the priest. "It was not of my wish, but I performed the ceremony. I have here the certificates."

Sir Denis drew Mary's arm within his own; the little gathering around the altar stood mute; the Rev. Adonis closed his book. Jack Window, as he faced the priest, with legs wide apart, held his hand aloft to restrain the marines at the entrance, and with orbs wonderfully dilated, stared from one to another all round.

"And is what this gentleman says true, Gerald?" Sir Denis said, softly, but with a terrible wrath on his face. "Are you married to that girl, and have you ventured to commit a crime like this? Sir! it is incredible.—Look up, and answer me. Why don't you speak?—Gentlemen, I beg you to withdraw for a little.—Thank you, my dear Bates, thank you."

Rose Prendergast had fallen at Gerald's feet ; but the priest raised her up, and now drooping on his arm, she stood with her gaze fixed on Gerald.

"Uncle," he gasped, "I am very bad—but not so bad as you think. I am free to marry cousin Mary. Yes, Rose," he turned to her with an air of despair—"yes, confess. It was, you know, not a legal marriage. You are a Catholic, and you knew I was a Protestant, and yet you would—Oh, God ! have mercy !—Terence ! Terence ! look to her. My Rose ! my sweet, dear love ! I was but jesting."

For as he spoke, Rose broke from her uncle, threw up her arms, and with a horrid laugh fell on the deck with clenched hands, as though she had been thrust through the heart.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DAWN OF HOPE.

THE scene I have related passed in a few seconds. It altered the destinies of many lives. Sir Denis Desmond summoned all his pride to conceal the wound inflicted upon the only living creature for whom he felt a warm affection. And Mary ? Well, she neither fainted nor burst into tears, but burying her face in her uncle's neck, as if to hide from her sight the miserable face of Gerald, so stood till the bitter cry of the heart-broken girl reached her. Then she forgot and forgave all, and clasped the inanimate form in her arms. But Sir Denis drew her firmly away. Though softened by Rose's anguish he was implacable to Gerald.

The *Anaxandroun* sailed next night for Malta, but Mary Butler, ere she left, had raised up the broken reed and given hope where all had been black despair. She interceded, as only such a woman could, with her uncle for the man who would have done her the greatest wrong. He tried at first, miserable wretch, to cover one baseness by another, and denied the validity of his marriage. But in vain, Mary touched his heart with remorse, and when she had won the victory there, she sought the injured wife. How she overcame one by one all the distracted girl's remonstrances, dissipated her jealousy, and softened her just indignation !

"It must have made the angels in Heaven bless her, sir ! It must indeed," said Père de Lancey, tapping his snuff-box. "She

was so happy when she reconciled my poor Rose to that wretched creature, and made her forgive him !”

I returned to the ship to bid Sir Denis adieu. He was in his cabin, and, when I entered, I saw the marks of tears on that iron face. Mary rose from the stool on which she had been sitting, with her head resting on his knees and her eyes appealing to him as he wrote.”

“And where will your regiment go to from the Cape ?”

“To India, Sir Denis, I believe. But I hope to manage to visit you before the time comes. I long to see India.”

“I understand—Well, you will find me at Auripore, I hope. You will, I hope, write regularly, and Mary or I will answer you.”

Mary repeated, “You will write regularly.” Then her grave face grew bright for a moment. “Your regiment will go out to India ! We shall see you again ! That, Terence, is a pleasure I at least shall look forward to with great joyfulness ! It will remove much of the sorrow which ought to attend the parting of such old friends. Wont it, dear uncle ?”

“And besides,” remarked Sir Denis, rather testily, “we are not going to part yet at all, for we shall meet in Malta ere I sail for India.”

But that was not to be. The regiment was detained longer than we expected. The transports were slow, and when we reached Valetta the packet for Alexandria, in which were Sir Denis and Mary, had been gone some days. Mrs. Desmond was my fellow-passenger. She was ill and suffering, and I attended her. By degrees there grew up between us an intimacy which led to friendship. I ventured one evening to speak to her of the marriage which had been broken off just in time by her arrival in Balaclava.

“The hand of Heaven was in it,” observed Mrs. Desmond. “Mary would have been unhappy had Gerald married her, for she did not love him.”

“How do you know ? Not love him !”

“Did she not tell me so ? She said to me, ‘It would have been a marriage by order on both sides, dear Rose, believe me. Gerald dared not refuse to marry when his uncle ordered it, for he depended on him altogether. He was in debt—he feared the anger of such an unforgiving man as my uncle—he dared not reveal his secret marriage to you. And as for myself, Rose, I declare to you, I never felt any love for Gerald. But uncle Denis prepared me to regard him as my future husband. And so we were both of us going to be married without caring for each other, and when each of us in fact was in love with somebody else.’”

" Mary said so ! "

" Yes ! she did, indeed. And very seriously too. "

" And did you, dear Mrs. Desmond, did you ask her who it was ? "—I could say no more.

" Yes, indeed I did ! I asked her, ' Who are you in love with, Mary darling ? ' But Mary only smiled, and said, ' That is a secret, Rose, like your marriage at the little chapel. It's an old flame, and I don't intend he shall ever know it. ' "

And then I asked Rose Desmond if she could guess who it was.

" Yes ! " she replied, " I am sure, Mr. Brady, Mary Butler likes you. "

I went away at once, in a violent fit of passion. Rose was trifling with me ! Then I returned to her side. I almost wore out her patience asking her to repeat what Mary said, and how she looked when she spoke. I pressed her a thousand times to tell me why she thought Mary cared for me. Rose could give me no *reason* for her belief. " But she was quite sure of it from Mary's manner. " She observed her eyes sparkle when good news came about me. When I was 'insensible at Lough-na-Carra, Mary was very anxious and unhappy, and almost forgot Miss Fraser's disappearance for a time. How I treasured up now the memory of every word of Rose Desmond's confidence—every look—every syllable of Mary's words ere she left ! I distracted myself by twisting them into every variety of expression, but the result was I dared not believe. I was too great a coward to risk the precious freight on so frail a bark.

Nor was Rose happy. Desmond was fond of her, and proud of her grace and beauty ; but she could not shut her eyes to his weakness. The ruin of his prospects affected her deeply, and to a haughty nature like Gerald's it was a sharp trial to fall so low in the eyes of all his friends.

" I would be happy with him in a cabin, but what can I give him in exchange but my devotion ? " sobbed Rose one day. " And what is that to one like him, who has been in the grand world, and who has lost all for me ? It is not to be wondered at if at times he feels how foolish he has been. But oh, I wish he would not let me see it, for it is very hard for me to bear. I am so glad we are going to some place where I can be always with him. I had no right to marry him and make him a beggar—no right to expose him to danger ; I will never let him out of my sight, and at least I can die for him. Love made him forget everything for me. "

" How can your marrying Major Desmond have exposed him to danger ? "

"Oh, I fear my brother Maurice. Father de Lancey let him know that Gerald tried to make out our marriage was not binding. His anger exceeded all bounds; he wrote me the cruellest, bitterest letters. Unhappy Maurice! Wherever he can strike a blow against England, there, he says, he will go till he can lift his arm no more."

We were to leave Malta at last, and then came the hour for another parting. Bates and Turnbull waited till the day drew nigh. They were astonished at the change in my looks and spirits.

"And now, dear Terence, good-bye for ever. Vale, vale, longumque vale!"

It was my good guardian who spoke, the old, dry man of law, and, though tears diminish as our sorrows increase, and as we need their solace the more, his eyes were dropping tears. We sat, hand in hand, on the parapet of an old battery; Major Turnbull, in the highest style of an old English gentleman—gaiters, and grey pants, tight cut-away coat, and double bandana of tremendous depth, and curly-brimmed hat—stood a little apart.

"My dear, dear old guardian! You will live, please God, to welcome me back, if not to see me happy. In four or five years more at most I shall return, please God, and you must meet and welcome me."

"Ah, my boy! in five years I would be ten years older than the time assigned for mortal life by Him who made us. I shall not be one of the exceptions to prove the rule. But Turnbull will. He shall be my residuary legatee, and shall inherit the right to welcome you, my lad, and he will discharge it as a labour of love, I know. He gets younger every day, though I'm sure he's near eighty this minute. There must be something in wigs and dye-stuff, after all. The fellows who use them desire to live long, and succeed by mere force of volition. Only it's too late, I'd try now. But, Terence, to talk as men ought to do who, in all human probability, will never meet again, particularly as they should do where one is the family lawyer—let us consider the situation. You have 200*l.* a year clear, as a rent-charge on Kilbiddy and Kilbride—that's good as long as land is land in Ireland, unless there are no people left to pay rents at all. Lough-na-Carra is gone; but you have the money from the courts to bring in 150*l.* a year in the three per cents.; Coolbawn will add about 180*l.* more, and then there's 200*l.* from Moy—over 700*l.* a year in all—not a bad income for a bachelor. It is a great question, then,—and I wanted to come to this—why you should not give up the army altogether. You have won credit and a good name. If you

like to practise, you can ; or you can settle down at Coolbawn when the house is repaired ; or you can do nothing, though I don't think you would like the business. Leave before the regiment goes to the Cape, I advise you. Why should you go out to India at all ? You run your head into the lion's—that is, the tigress's—mouth, and expose yourself to her tricks, and to fever, cholera, cobras, Fraser, and all kinds of dangers."

"Dear Mr. Bates, do not dissuade me—my mind is made up. I will sail with the regiment next week at every risk. I feel that there is a little regard for me lingering in her heart. If I could only see her, I might save her ! I would take her away from that poisoned atmosphere. You shake your head. But I am assured she does not quite forget me, and face to face I may persuade her. Fraser and she have broken for ever. If ever I meet *him*, let him beware ; but I promise you I will not trouble myself to search him out."

"India is a large place !"

"Yes ! But Sir Denis will help me. I can get leave, I will not leave a corner of it untried, as long as I have health. And it would be uncandid towards you if I did not confess there is another motive. It may be a miserable comfort, but it will still be some consolation to be under the same sky as Mary Butler."

"I tell you, Terence, Sir Denis will never hear of it. He likes you, but he hates your family and your name. He would never consent to your union with his niece, supposing Miss Butler regarded you with a stronger feeling than friendship. And why, after all that has passed, should you think so ?"

"Sir Denis loves his niece, Mr. Bates, and I am satisfied he would not sacrifice her happiness to his own prejudices. I do not mean to say she loves me, but I am not without hope. When we parted she expressed such pleasure at my coming to India."

"What less could she say ! Words of mere civility to an old friend and kinsman, who had been with her in such trouble ! My dear Terry, don't build your hopes on words such as these."

"But, Mr. Bates, there was something about her so changed towards me. Her look—her manner ! I almost venture to think, from that and from what Mrs. Desmond told me, Mary is not quite indifferent to me."

"Then it's a great mistake for her not to say so. She must know how you feel towards her."

"But if she did she could not encourage me, when she knew Sir Denis had set his heart on her marriage with Gerald. Besides I never ventured to breathe a word to her of my love. Whenever I

wrote, I struck out every syllable which seemed too affectionate. I watched over my feelings closely, and I scarcely ventured to speak lately when I was in her presence."

"You were a very odd pair of lovers, I'm thinking. But it's just as well; Sir Denis would never hear of it. I have heard him say often there has been a curse over his house ever since your ancestor married a Desmond. And he is set on getting a great match for Mary. It was only for family reasons he desired Gerald there to marry her. A pretty kettle of fish *he* has made of it! He went through every penny of his father's money before he left the Guards, and Sir Denis had to pay a good lump for him besides. Gerald Desmond will not have the value of a pinch of snuff beyond the paltry annuity when the old man goes."

The French mail steamer next day was steaming away to Marseilles, and my eyes were straining to catch the forms of Bates and Major Turnbull, who vanished at last, waving their hats and handkerchiefs towards the parapet on which I mounted. Gerald Desmond and his wife went in the same ship, for he had been appointed to a depot at home.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE PROMISED LAND AT LAST.

THIS British army! Wandering, Ulysses-like—for ever wandering—from place to place. Circe and her Syrens here—Scylla and Charybdis there—while pale Penelope, Britannia, sits at home, reads the newspapers, and pares the estimates! Here is a land where fevers grow; there is one famous for vomito. This is a garrison sacred to ennui; there is another where man must live by brandy, and die by it. Here is a gay capital where the mess-bills are heavy—where balls, drags, picnics, theatricals, are necessities, and "bill-transactions" lead to the grave of "selling-out." *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena doloris?*

Mr. Webster spoke once of the tap of the British drum which follows the course of the rising sun round the world—a fine image. But to the British subaltern the reality is dreary enough. He stands sentinel on every shore, gazing towards home, over the sad sea-wave. In Indian wastes—amid American snows—on African sands—on ocean-beaten rocks in European seas, he paces to and fro, and thinks of the *Gazette*, of duns, of Miss Bellona or Mrs. Mars, vowing he will send in his papers; and with the most

peaceable intentions in the world, burning for the chance of another war, with anybody in particular—perhaps, in spite of or in consequence of the *entente cordiale*, and from old habit's sake—the French for choice. And Providence is very good to him. If there is not always a great European war going on, there is sure to be a little savage one—a Persian—a Chinese—an Affghan expedition—a Caffre campaign—a New Zealand guerilla; or there is some tribe to be punished in India, and such places as Sitana and Bhotan rise to the top for a moment, and having figured in the votes largely and in the gazettes slightly, go down again.

The Bengal Tigers, full of spirits, are now on their way to China, where we are going to “protect commerce” and ensure the fulfilment of treaties, and inflict a Christian chastisement on the barbarians who do not respect the rights of foreigners in a strange land. The old soldiers—sunburnt, gnarled fellows, who have had nothing but hard knocks in the Crimea—burn for more profitable victories, and hail the prospect of sacking a temple or a town with delight; and the young soldiers, eager for adventure and ambitious of stripes and medals, are animated with equal enthusiasm. To me our destination brought unalloyed disappointment. The main object of my life was to visit the land where all my hopes and fears centred, and had I known of the change in time I would have left the service. But it was too late. How little consequence it seems to the world whether it is the 1st regiment or the 2nd regiment which goes to the Isle of Dogs! What enormous results the route entails on many a man for life! The Quartermaster-General breaks more hearts, ruins more plans, and brings about and knocks off more marriages than all the cupids, bill-discounters, and match-makers in Great Britain and Ireland together. There is Jack Wilmot, our senior major, gnawing the ends of his moustache as he thinks that by the very next ship will be landed at the Cape the disconsolate lady he had left in Brighton after a short married life of two months. There is Brevet-Major Nash, beside himself with delight at the idea of his escape from Miss Vanderdouch, or rather from her terrible mamma and the two great Dutch boors of brothers who have called him to account for his marked attentions at the Governor's ball.

“It was all that filthy Cape champagne. I told the old girl so, but she wouldn't have it. I believe she would have fastened me for life to that tremendous Cape sheep, only for this beneficent idea of sending us to China. Long life to the Horse Guards, and death to the mandarins and Dutch widows with big sons and daughters!”

The *Triton* was taking it easy over the long roll which was all

that remained of the effects of a strong breeze that had rattled us along for some days past. Captain Tadger, a compact, tight little mariner, with his lips wide apart, was taking a sight at the sun through a very ancient sextant on the quarter-deck. Mr. Brittles, chief officer, a loose, long gentleman, with oiled black locks, patent leather boots, and snow-white jacket, was occupied in the same way with an instrument spick and span in polished brass and ebony. "Have you got it, Mr. Brittles?"

"Yes, Captain Tadger."

"What do you make it?"

"It's $74^{\circ} 10' 30''$."

"That's nigh what I've got. All right, Mr. Brittles."

And Captain Tadger and Mr. Brittles, each attended by a myrmidon with a slate, retire to their cabins to work out their reckonings, and several young gentlemen who have been craning their necks to bring down the luminary to his proper level, go off on similar errands.

"I never can understand how the deuce they do it," observed Lieutenant Groby to Ensign Stubbs, with an air which implied he considered the whole proceeding very futile.

"Not exactly. But I know it's by trigonometry, Gro."

"Oh, by trigonometry, is it? Then I suppose it's all right. Eight bells gone! come down to lunch." And then when Captain Tadger reappeared, there was a general questioning, to which Tadger responded by a reference to Mr. Brittles, then and there affixing a paper to the saloon-door.

"A hundred and heaty-three miles since yesterday, that's what we've done."

"And where are we now, captain?"

"We're about heateen miles southerd of Point de Galle, in the Highland of Ceylon. We must stand hoff a little more, or we'll be getting near them Basses' rocks—ugly customers, I can tell you. I was near lost my first voyage in the *Ross-shire*, on them Basses, as ever was."

"The *Ross-shire*! Were you on board then?" asked I. "Do you remember a Mrs. Brady—a passenger?"

"Don't I, just, doctor! I was an apprentice, about fifteen years old, at the time. Wasn't she a stunner, I can tell you! Mrs. Brady was a beauty, and no mistake. When she walked on deck, now and then, in her widdy's cap, all hands used to slope aft to get a good look at her; and proud she used to be of it—such eyes as she had and hair—not all the widdy's caps that ever was crimped would hold it, I can tell you. I beg pardon, doctor! Was the lady related to you any ways?"

"She was, Captain Tadger."

"She was, was she? Well now, I'll tell you a most 'stron'ry thing—the night we struck—and I do believe the old *Ross-shire* was one of the few as ever tried that game on and didn't lose at it—one of the old sort, she was—they don't build none of 'em nowadays—the women gets all huddled up on the poop, and a sea comes aboard and washes some of 'em over—Mrs. Brady, and some soldiers' wives, and a native nurse with a European child—of course *they* never came aboard again. Well, doctor, surely we all thought they was lost. There was a little boy belonging to her on board, and when we put into Ceylon, an Indian officer, one Captain Fraser, that was in charge of her, and was paying her great attention, sends away all the natives except the man nurse, and packs off the little chap and the servant to Ireland. More than a year after that, I fell in with one of the hands that had been aboard the *Ross-shire*; we had a glass together, and he let out that Mrs. Brady wasn't aboard the *Ross-shire* when she struck. She was up to some dodge or other, you see; and she gives this chap and another a couple of sovereigns to hold their tongues, and what does she do, but slip out of the ship when we put into Madras Roads and lands there dressed like an ayah—and the poor sergeant's wife took her place in the cabin, and pretended to be so sick she couldn't stir. It was she was carried over the side, you see, and not Mrs. Brady at all. Well, Captain Fraser, I heard, married her in India. But anyway if he did she's got another name now. For here's what bothered me. Some years ago there came a lady aboard us at Bombay—a Mrs. Allayne she called herself. She kept very much to herself, and had her servants to take in her meals; but one day she comes up on deck for a bit of fresh air—and she sits down in her chair and begins running her beads like a Papist or a native. It struck me I'd seen the face before, and the more I looked the surer I was; for though years had passed, no one could mistake her—unless there were two of the handsomest creatures God ever made as like as two peas. So I goes up, and bows to her politely, and after a word or two about how we were getting on, I says, 'It's a good many years since I seen you now, ma'am.' 'Indeed?' says she, very haughty; 'and where was that? I've never been out of India before—I was born there.' 'You were at sea, though, before, if I'm not mistaken,' ma'am, says I, 'in the old *Ross-shire* when you was Mrs. Brady.' 'Mrs. what?' says she. 'Mrs. Brady,' says I. 'Captain Tadger,' she says, looking me full in the face, and just a trifle angry, 'how old are you?' I told her, taking off a year or two, as we do over the forties. 'Then,' says she, 'Captain Tadger, you'll never be a

wise man, I fear—you've lost your memory, or you've got a new one—it matters little to me. But remember if we're to be friends,' she adds, holding out her hand and laughing—'that my name is Allayne, and that you never saw me before;' and down she goes to her cabin, and leaves me in doubt whether I'm on my head or my heels."

"Where," I inquired, "were you bound for, Captain Tadger?"

"For the port of Liverpool from Bombay, and the lady, whoever she was, cleared right out from the custom-house, and took a passage to Dublin by the steamer, for my second officer saw after her traps and put them on board. And if that wasn't Mrs. Brady, I'm a Dutchman!" added Captain Tadger, and truth to say, he might have been a Hollander if they are like the type of the race popularly known in England.

"Captain Tadger," reported Mr. Brittles, "there is a man-of-war steamer in the nor'-east signalling to us. She has fired a gun and shows British colours. Looks to me like a gun-boat."

Captain Tadger hastened on deck, and I followed him. All the officers who had glasses to spare were inspecting the stranger, who was coming down as fast as he could steam.

"I can make 'em out, sir! Seven, eight, six, three, one. That's her number."

The signal boy repeated, "seven, eight, six, three, one. Royal Navy. *Hannah Conder*."

"The *Anaconda*, is it?" said Mr. Brittles. "Tender to *Walrus*, flag-ship of Admiral Sir John Window, K.C.B., commanding the station. What can she want?"

That we soon found out, as the transport was brought to, for the *Anaconda* coming up on our quarter, lowered a boat, and a naval officer in great haste appeared on board.

"I have despatches for the senior officer in charge of the troops on board this transport—very fortunate to find you we are. There's bad news for you, gentlemen."

The senior officer was Wilmot, and as he opened and read the despatch, his face darkened. "There need be no secret about this," said he, gravely. "No China for us this time. The Bengal army is in open mutiny. They are murdering their officers—the people have risen, and have massacred men, women, and children, at several large stations. My orders are to proceed at once to Calcutta, with the troops under my orders—and we shall have nobler work in saving an empire than in fighting the Chinese."

The officer brought no papers, or news of any kind, except vague rumours. The *Anaconda*, with several swift vessels had been

detached to intercept the ships on their way to China, and the admiral only knew of the events which had occurred by the brief contents of his despatches.

And Mary was in the midst of it all! There was only one consolation, but it was a great one. I would be near her. A horrible event had altered our course, but I welcomed it indeed, for now we were on our way to "my promised land."

Captain Tadger, after observations of a general character, on the risks incurred by him as to insurances, underwriters, and the like, proceeded under friendly compulsion, to lay the course of the *Triton* for India.

"Do you see that 'ere surf, far away, just under the loom of the land?" quoth he, that evening. "That's them Basses I was a speaking of—that's the very spot where the *Ross-shire* had such a squeak for it, more than twenty years ago."

CHAPTER XLIX.

"'TIS RANK REBELLION."

HOW slowly the *Triton* cleaves its way! Blow, wind! blow, gale! O let us hasten on! They were all thinking of revenge, and of saving an empire. I could only fix my thoughts on one little object. She might be in danger, and an hour might save her. Another cruiser stopped the ship off Madras. The news she brought made each man's cheek turn pale, and filled him with feelings too strong for words. God knows there was enough of atrocity in that mutiny and insurrection to justify much vengeance! But how many lives have the ignorant or terrified scribblers to answer for, who filled the press with hideous inventions, and drove our soldiers wild with fury and passion? There was no need for monstrous fabrication. Cawnpore, Futtehghur, Jhansi, and Delhi, were quite enough in all their horrors. A morbid appetite for the horrible and the cruel seized on the public, which nigh destroyed the tone of the national mind and the reputation of the country, in spite of the glory won in scenes more trying than any set battle-field.

The Bengal Tigers looked over the bulwarks at the low cloud-like shore on our left, with an ominous glare in their eyes. Each man felt that he had to avenge nameless cruelties, and to punish a race guilty of unheard-of barbarities. My soul sickened within me. I dared not let my mind dwell on what I read. My eye

wandered in vain over the columns of the papers for any news of Sir Denis Desmond. He was at Auriopore when last I heard from him ; but that was many many weeks ago ; and in that letter he expressed his satisfaction at the results of his policy :—

“There have been ridiculous apprehensions created in Bengal,” he added, “by the conduct of some few mutinous sepoys ; but the Bengal army has long been in an unsatisfactory state, owing to the cowardice of the Government ; and I am not prepared to say the troubles will prove to be altogether so ludicrous as they now are, if the authorities do not make the most signal examples of the fellows at once. The contagion will spread, although I do not fear its extension to Auriopore. Here everything is quiet ; the people are reconciled to our rule, and I trust I shall soon root out the fakirs, and other agents of mischief who infest the bazaars, and are always hostile to a settled, resolute Government, which represses mendicancy, and endeavours to educate the people. I am opposed to any Government proselytizing, but I am equally adverse to the domination of the native priests.”

There was no news from the west of Cawnpore. Scraps of letters without date—telegrams written in wild excitement—ravings of correspondents—mad demands for the instant execution of acts and persons quite beyond reach—no news of Auriopore !

What passionate longing for action ! what a fever in my veins to burst the bonds of the watery prison, and be free to act ! And what joy, one early morning, as we glided up the Hooghly, to see the spires of Calcutta in the distance, and the forest of masts at Garden Reach !

The sergeant major came aft and touched his cap.

“I don’t know whether you’re aware of it, sir ; but there’s a number of the enemy on the beach. We could knock a lot of them over from where we are now. It isn’t above six hundred yards, I should say, major.”

Wilmot smiled. “Why, sergeant-major, I thought you knew India ; you were here before. They are coolies at work on the landings and poor fishermen—no enemies of ours, you know.”

“I beg your pardon, major,” responded the bluff sergeant-major. “My idea was we were to open fire the moment we saw any of the natives, as I’ve been reading in the papers they’re all our enemies to a man.”

And he retired, discomfited, to a council of war of the sergeants, who were in a knot discussing political news and measures as taught by the Indian press, ere the morning parade.

India at last ! The land where I was born, and where my

father's bones are lying—where my darling is in the midst of dangers and horrors indescribable—and is it thus I see you, after all my longings and my hopes?

And instead of immediate action there came the most maddening delay. We could not move up at once. The country was in arms. The capital must be protected. The force at hand was small. Pale Calcutta trembled for itself. At night the inhabitants cowered on board the ships in the river. By day they inveighed against the only man whose calm courage they could not understand, and whose imperturbable justice they stigmatized as timidity. I was told off for hospital duty. I hope my patients were not sufferers, but I am quite sure I did not understand very much of their cases. I thought at times of running off bodily, and trying to make my way up country. But the utter wildness of such a scheme was too apparent. I set to work to learn Hindostanee; and I toiled at it night and day whilst the weary hours passed at Fort William.

There was news at last from Auripore—"good news," they said. Sir Denis Desmond was indeed shut up in the place; but he had a stout garrison and the Rajah of Tangree was collecting a force to attack the besiegers, who had marched from a neighbouring station after firing the bungalows and murdering their officers.

I at once waited on the Governor's aide-de-camp, whom I knew. He repeated all I have just told you. "And the women?" I asked. "What of them? There were women in Auripore?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Captain Grierson. "The commissioner's daughter, for instance, and half a dozen officials' wives, and more—we are not quite sure how many. Sir Denis, in a dispatch dated some weeks ago, when matters were looking serious, informed his Excellency that he was about to send away all the women to Palka under a small escort; that was just before the investment of Auripore. He added that his daughter was most anxious to stay, but that he did not consider it would be prudent. If he sent off the escort at the time he named, his Excellency fears they may have fallen into the hands of the Goreepore mutineers. God bless me, doctor! you look ill. Shall I get you some wine?"

"No! don't mind. It's only the heat. But if you could help me to get up country with any force going to Auripore, you would confer on me the very deepest obligation."

"Well, for the sake of old times, I'll see what can be done. I'll let you know if we hear anything new. Good-bye."

Like a criminal reprieved at the gallows-foot, and told to wander where he pleases, I received an order one morning from the P.M.O. "to march to-morrow at four A.M. in medical charge

of a detachment to Buttra in Azimghur, and to report myself on arrival to Deputy Inspector-General Galusha Growl."

The days were intensely hot, the dust insufferable ; but my only thought was that every march would bring me nearer to her. An agonizing telegram was for ever before me—"We shall be able to hold out in case all stand to us for ten weeks more. Women and children under escort for Agra ; only one stays with——" And then the dispatch broke off—the wire was cut."

And what marches they were ! The burnt bungalows, the ruined stations, blackened walls and chimneys ; no human creature visible, but hanging on the trees by the road-side, festering in the sun, were—— And the hideous array of gorged vultures, and the wheeling crowds of loathsome buzzards and foul birds, whose prey is the flesh of the dead ! At intervals along the road we met parties of sick under escort of officers with dispatches.

"Any news of Auripore?"

"No—nothing certain. The Bazaar report at Cawnpore is the garrison had to give in, and were murdered. But those who know the Commissioner Desmond, and Colonel Tickler who commands, don't give the smallest credit to it."

We reached Buttra, but the field-force was broken up into flying columns, and scouring the country all around in search of bands of rebels, who were showing more than usual enterprise and conduct.

Galusha Growl, notwithstanding his name, was a kind-hearted, obliging man, with a turn for sentiment, and decided gifts in the way of eating and drinking.

"Sir," he replied to me, lifting his head from a huge tankard of commissariat beer, to which he had given a head by dusting it profusely with carbonate of soda from a pepper-castor, and wiping his moustache with a broad, brown fist, "it's quite true ; you're no use here. It's just like my chief to send you. I see no reason why you should not join General Potter's column, which is as likely to go to Auripore as not, as soon as we hear the Bilelee rebels are cleared off the road on his flank, and Sir Colin is about doing that very soon. There's already Dr. MacBride, a countryman of yours, with Dobson's horse and the Punjaubees, but there's plenty of work for all the surgeons, and you can join them as soon as we get a chance. I don't wonder at your wishing to give a hand to the gallant fellows at Auripore—Heaven help them !"

I could not eat, nor drink, nor sleep—my very reason was shaken—for three weary days and nights longer must I wait. This was indeed to be in the furnace—to feel the blood boiling and mark the body wasting—to look into the glass at an awful face with blood-shot eyes and fevered cheek.

But once more a reprieve came. Dr. Growl sent me word one night that I could get off with a Lieutenant of Dobson's Horse, who had come in with dispatches and was returning at dawn with his handful of troopers to join Potter's column.

We were riding over an open plain dotted with clumps of trees and fields of pulse, but not a creature could be made out as we swept it with our glasses.

"This is very different work from your Russian campaign, Doctor Brady!" said my young companion. "There you had civilized enemies. Here we have savages to deal with; they never spare us!"

"And do you spare them?"

"The niggers? Oh! certainly not; just shoot them like dogs, as they are, whenever we come across them."

"Well! that balances accounts between nigger and Christian pretty evenly."

All day long the heat had been increasing as we pressed on to our rendezvous. The sultry eventide was more trying than the fervid midday: the blasts of hot air becoming more violent and frequent, presaged the advent of the thunderstorm already muttering in the east, and blackening the horizon with clouds barred by incessant streaks of lightning.

The native troopers were uneasy, and cast glances in every direction.

"They have made out fresh elephant-tracks, which must belong to the enemy," explained the officer. "You can see them and horse-hoofs too, all over the ground, in the very direction we are going! They must be making right for Gumwarra, where Dobson was to be; and if so, they will have a treat. But *I* don't envy them. We must look out not to be pounced on by the runaways. Ho—there is something up. What is it, Jemadar?"

The grey-bearded Sikh was screening his eyes with one hand and looking towards the west; the other hand was held aloft, as when a keeper "soho's" to a point of his dogs on a grouse mountain.

"It's a body of cavalry. There is much dust, sir, and it advances rapidly!"

Every horseman, standing erect in his stirrups, gazed anxiously.

"Can you see elephants, Sahib?" asked the Jemadar of Lieutenant Eustace, who had dismounted and was steadying his glass against a lance. "They will be seen first of all, for they are black and thick and high."

"It's all right, Jemadar," replied Eustace, leaping gaily into the saddle, "our own lads, thank heaven! It will shorten our ride by

a good many miles. Now we can march quietly and save our horses."

The dust-cloud drew near to a clump of trees, spread out thinly, and by degrees settled down so that we could see the men had dismounted, and were picketing their horses. As we approached a couple of officers and a sowar galloped out to meet us.

They were both young men; one, Colonel Dobson, tall, gaunt, and solemn-looking, beetle-browed, swarthy, with black eyes, and thick beard and moustache. The other, a bright blue-eyed, cheery-looking lad. Their heads were covered with conical helmets, terminating in a metal spike, and swathed with a red shawl. The tunic of dust-coloured cotton cloth, ornamented with worsted braid on the neck, breast, and cuffs, was provided with steel shoulder-straps, and chains attached outside, which afforded defence against sword-cuts from the wrist to the neck. Each wore the yellowish leather boots, used by horsemen in India, coming over the knee, and gauntlets of light mail, nearly reaching to the upper part of the forearm. Sabres, in plain heavy sheaths, slung from their baldrics, and pistols stuck in waist-belts, gave the wearers somewhat the air of *condottieri*, and conveyed an impression very unlike that which one has generally of British officers in the reign of Victoria.

"What news, Eustace?"

"None, Colonel, except what may be in these dispatches. What have you for us?"

"Nothing much—a hunt after a swarm of scoundrels who managed to escape us. They were encamped under the very tope where we are now, and they must have had a scrimmage with some of our people, for we have picked up a wounded man. It's beastly work. We never *can* catch them."

Three tents, and a shed of canvas, constituted the only cover for the force.

"I fear we shall get it with a vengeance," said Eustace. "I hope Beecher has something to eat for us. If it's heavy rain we cannot move till the sun has been out, for the country will be too heavy for the horses."

He raised the curtain of the tent—a fine mat of small bamboo fibres, through which one can see into the light.

"Hallo, Eustace! I'm just ready for you. You are in time to escape the ducking that's in store for outsiders to-night," called out a pleasant voice, the owner of which was engaged in slicing cucumbers into a large plated goblet. A lamp lighted up the interior of the tent, which was pitched as carefully as if the inmates were going to live there a week instead of a few hours. The table was covered with a white cloth and glasses, and two or three

servants dived in and out under the curtain at the other end with dishes in their hands. Portable camp-chairs were placed by the side of the table. From the tent-poles were slung telescopes, flasks, and pistols. The ground was covered with an Indian carpet.

"You must rough it to-night, gentlemen. The beer is rather queer—no time to cool it—the abdar is *non est*—lots of our traps not come up yet. But Mahomed says the soup will not be bad. The last village has furnished us with lots of poultry. There's a good curry, and some gun-bullock steaks. That's our carte. But, if Colonel Dobson will go after impalpable abstractions called the rebel army, and gallop away from our stores, your messman can't help it, can he?"

"We'll do well enough, Beecher, if there's plenty of beer and a drop of Exshaw," said the Colonel. "I confess to a leetle thirst after this particularly fine warm day, and the agreeable exercise we've had. Thirty-five miles, if it's a yard. A few sore backs, I suspect, and some sore-footed people outside."

"I suppose if this storm is as bad as it looks we shall not start in the morning?" inquired Eustace, who was of a Sybarite turn. "I wish, if it is going to rain, that it would come down at once, in order that a fellow may know his fate."

"Faith, and I can tell you, mee boy, if there's any value in signs and tokens, your doubts will soon be set at rest," said a man, with a rich round voice, who appeared in the fold of the curtain.

He was middle-aged, short, and corpulent. The strict observance of the uniform regulations of his corps did not detract from the unbellicose and peaceful bourgeois look of his round, sleek figure, and broad, honest, clean-shaven face, which was warmed into a purple glow by an agency far hotter than that of the sun. He had an exaggerated spike to his helmet, an extra thick turban around it; his belts, boots, spurs, baldric, and cummerbund were all on a grandiose if not gigantic scale; but, instead of swords and pistols, Doctor MacBride was hung round with instrument cases, a telescope, and a flask or two. There was neither chain on his arms nor gauntlet on his hand; and, in spite of his odd appearance, there was no greater talker, no greater grumbler, no harder rider, no harder drinker, no man softer-hearted always, or more composed in time of danger than the doctor of Dobson's Horse.

The Doctor's lamentations were interrupted by the introduction of my humble self, and of my dispatches from my P. M. O. He read them, turned up his eyes, and exclaimed, "That's the way Growl sends lambs to the slaughter. But you're welcome, Mr. Brady; and we'll do what we can for you. Go on with your

dinner. It's not likely you'll get many as good, or as much time to eat it in. Here am I, after riding as if I was Dick Turpin ten times over, with just the same risk of life and limb in case of a scrimmage, without the chance of a word in the dispatch of our friend here, who would have the honour to report that the doctor, by his attention, &c. &c., gave every proof of zeal and satisfaction : here am I, when all my work is over, obliged to go on with the extras ; and, as if I had not enough of my own, there's a job picked up for me at the end of my day from Heaven knows where, and a native lady adds herself to the list. Yes, thank you, Beecher, a little more curry ! Beershrab lao !”

“ But about your patients ?” inquired the Colonel. “ What of our countryman—is he a soldier or a civilian, or what ? ”

“ Well, indeed, and if you listened to the nonsense he's talking you'd think he was the Governor-General or the Commander-in-Chief himself. He's very near being one of the army of martyrs ; he's got a bad fever, is weak from loss of blood and poor food (the wing, if you please) ; then he's a broken arm, and a bad cut on the head, a nasty thrust in the body—not to speak of a few incisions of all sorts. He is snug enough in the joss-house, and I've left my coloured brother with him for the present.”

“ Can you make out who he is ? ”

“ Make out ? Oh, I can make out plenty. He's a Crimayan hero by his talk, and he's going on about the Redan too, and Sebastopole, mixed up with Delhi and Lucknow. And—there, you won't tell—I've found out one thing that's against him, he's Irish, mere Irish, 'pon my honour.” The dish of baked earth, with balls of prepared charcoal, was brought in and placed on the table, and each man lighted his cigar.

“ A fine stout fellow, too ! ” the Doctor proceeded. “ The arm I set was a picture. I don't know if I'll not have to take it off ; but there's just a chance. He'd never have come round without help from a first-rate medical officer, such as you find gallopin' all over India with Dobson's Punjaubees.”

The rain could be heard in the distance, coming on with a hurried tramp, like the march of a great army ; and the tumult of the wind which accompanied the tempest was as the roar of their voices. The glare of lightning and the volleys of thunder crashed forth out of the black sky from the gloomy pall of Heaven's battle like the blaze and furious outcry of the cannon.

“ That's a pleasant look-out,” cried MacBride. “ We'll be washed out of this before very long, and have the eyes burned out of our heads, and the horses will kick us to death ; and if we live we'll have no breakfast nor a stitch of dry clothes.”

“If there was a man in India worth a button among those rebels, this would be the sort of night he’d select to attack us,” added the doctor, after a heavy roll, which made the tent vibrate in every thread. “I don’t speak so much of Sikhs as of Britishers like ourselves. We hate night fighting—you don’t, Colonel, for you are always ready for a destruction of the tissues day or night—but most of us. Then our powder is wet, but swords keep sharp; our drill doesn’t do much good till we’ve all got together over the first fluster. If a fellow but knew his ground as these men do, how he would do a Hohenlinden now and then with the chill off.”

Just as he spoke the report of firearms was distinctly heard in a lull of the storm.

“There! I thought I heard it before!” he exclaimed. “Bedad, here’s the fellow I’ve been talking of turned up at last!”

The terrified servants ran in shouting out, “Oh, Sahib! Sahib! the budmashes! the budmashes!” A cuff on the head of a venerable-looking old gentleman, who was the foremost and noisiest of the throng, was Dobson’s reply to the exclamation.

In an instant we were on our feet. We seized our swords and pistols, and rushed out of the tent.

Scarcely were we in our saddles ere, by the lightning flashes, we saw bearing down on us a wild swarm of horsemen in white. To meet them in line was out of the question. Decision and coolness were invaluable, and in our leader and his officers these were the growth of constant peril, for they were men who had been carrying their lives in their hands every hour. In front of the grove there was a low bank of earth. In less time than I take to transcribe these lines, the Sikhs were formed inside the tope with their faces towards the enemy—one half dismounted—the horsemen in the rear. “Steady, my children; aim low when they’re a few yards from the bank,” cried Dobson. His officers repeated the words. The cries of the enemy and the shouts of their leaders were audible above the trampling of the horses’ hoofs. “Have your sword and pistol handy. It will be more use than your lancet,” whispered Eustace. The lightning blazed out along the white-turbaned horde. We could catch the dark faces and bright blades for an instant, and the outstretched heads of the horses; and then as the thunder rolled above, the sparkle and flash of carbine and pistol twittered in the dark, and the rush of grape from our two guns on the flank hurtled through the sowars. But they were too close upon us; in another instant the rebel horsemen were engaged in a *mêlée* with our men. Their white turbans and coats marked them out as they rode in among the

trees, where our kharkee was invisible. The nimble Sikhs on foot cut at and shot them as they passed. Louder than the shouts and the cries, and the clicking of steel, and the raging storm, rose Dobson's voice and the cheers of his officers. In less than a minute the sowars were flying out of the tope in the darkness, chased here and there across the plain as the lightning marked them out for an instant. Dobson was excited.

"Order Fordyce to limber up at once," he cried. "I'll teach the scoundrels how they dare attack me again! MacBride! leave the surgeon to look after our wounded, with a party of men to pick them up and finish any of the budmashes who may be shamming. And now, my lads, to finish our night's work."

And ere I could say a word I was left alone in the wood, which was filled with groans and piteous cries, whilst my Sikhs went prowling about among the wounded, and——

Now and then they returned with a comrade, and I attended to their cuts as they were laid on the table of the mess-tent. An hour or more passed. The storm abated, the thunder ceased, but the lightning was still fierce and frequent. I sat, when my work was done, with my head between my hands, thinking of those in peril and of the horror of such scenes as those for timid women, when a cry of alarm caught my ear, and the cowering natives in the tent muttered, "There, Sahib, they are coming again!" and vanished among the trees.

"What is it?" I cried.

"Mount and fly, sir," was the answer of the terrified syce. I listened, and heard the tramp of advancing horses again. "They are our men returning."

"No; sowars! sowars! Sahib, fly!"

For me there was no flight. I felt my way out to the front of the wood. There could be no doubt as to who they were, for the fatal white shimmered in the darkness. And I was alone with the wounded and the dead—the sole miserable victim on whom they could wreak their vengeance! I felt the bitterness of death would not be to die, but that I did not die for her. The band swept past me, and as they moved towards the tents I heard a clear shrill voice in Hindostanee exclaim, 'No time to kill, remember! Carry him to the litter, dead or alive, at once, and be off.'

I crouched down in the grass. There was suddenly a great cry as if of rejoicing. The troopers returned out of the wood surrounding a light car on which there was a litter. By the side there rode a horseman, who bent forward and looked in between the curtains. He raised his head! I saw within a few feet of me the face which I had so wearily longed to see, and which was now to

me more terrible than any enemy's! Who could mistake the eyes—the eyes which sparkled with a keen delight as she raised her head from the curtain of the litter? I could have touched her robe had I sprang to my feet! I had seen her at last!

CHAPTER L.

" MISERRIMUS."

THE Sikhs and camp servants stealing back, found me lying like one that was dead, and bore me gently into the tent, where lay the wounded whom I had tended. But who was to bind *my* wound? Dobson and his baffled troops returned at daybreak. The European they had left in the Temple was gone. I was very ill; my head was weak and wandering. The yellow curtains opened for ever on the same scene, from daylight to evening. Day after day, as it seemed to me, I was borne along in my litter in a painless lethargy. Thick dust, and above it the heads of long-bearded troopers—the monotonous fields of gram and dall and Indian corn—the ever same trees—the ever same sounds of bit and curb, and horse-hoof, and the cry of the buzzard and the vulture. How I longed for the halt! And again how I longed for the march! When we halted there were sure to come my doctor, and Dobson and Eustace, and all. And the same questions, "How do you find yourself now?" and the same mutterings outside, of which I never could catch more than a mumble in reply to the question, "How do you think he is to-day?"

And I had no question but the one, "Is there any news from Auripore?" And the answer was for ever, "None." But one morning in came Dobson's bearded face, and without more to do he said—"I'm glad to tell you Government has resolved to strike a blow for the relief of Auripore. We are to form part of the column."

That evening I was in the saddle. Pale and weak in the body, but a giant still, for I had faith and love—the springs of life—within me.

"What do the spies say, MacTavish?" asked the Brigadier. "What have the rascals got?"

"There is Nurpat Sing, 2000; some 500 pukka Sepoys, the rest Oude men; there is Pretty Poll Sing, 200 Byswarrees; the Rajah of Amethie, 2500, various; the Talukdar of Khote, 700 matchlockmen; the Moulvie of Sishabad, 700 sowars; the whole

of Poppleton's Horse, under some unknown rascal ; and the blessed Ranee of Auripore, with 2000 horse. They have no end of elephants, and 20 guns. That's the report my spies bring in, sir," quoth our Quartermaster-General, raising his eyes from his papers and glancing at his chief through a pair of portentous spectacles. "And it's pretty much what I expected," he added, taking a large pinch of snuff, and reinforcing it by a strong cheroot.

The Brigadier checked off the figures. "That makes in all, say at least 8000 men, and 20 guns. It is not three to one, and we have a battery and a half. I fear they will never wait for our coming, but at all events we shall have the credit of relieving the place." The Brigadier added, "It is good news to hear they are all holding out so well. Sir Denis is a splendid fellow !"

So much I overheard as the column halted within a day's march of Auripore, ere the morning sun had attained its full power. I could only clasp my hands and raise my eyes to heaven.

But, as if misfortune was ever to be my portion, there came an order for me to take charge of the sick, when the force moved on. I said nothing. To think that Auripore was near, and to be tied like a martyr to the stake was beyond my control, and I resolved

* * * *

They moved off, and once again I was left with my sad charge. I gazed after them through the watch-fires, and took note of their course. They will halt in an hour, and wait for day ; then they will move on and reconnoitre the ground—that will be at four o'clock ; they have twelve miles to go ; the infantry are tired—they will need five hours at least to come within sight of the enemy—say nine o'clock at the outside. If I leave at six in the morning, I shall be in plenty of time. It's settled.

I walked back to my tent, visited my sick, and passed the gate of the walled enclosure in which the rear-guard was halted. The Belooch on duty presented as I gave the countersign.

"There are budmashes about, my lord," he remark ; "for the jackals yelp over there, and the dogs are barking."

But I walked on, and heeded him not. The stars were shining brightly. I longed for the hour when I should be free, and strained my eyes towards the west in the direction of our column, and I followed the tracks made in the soft soil. Once I was startled by a noise in the grass, and I fancied I saw something move not far from me ; but it might have been a lizard. I relaxed my grasp of my pistol, and turning round set off on my way back to the camp fires, humming to myself.

Again the grass rustled. I stood still, with my hand on my

revolver. Suddenly I was pinned by the elbows—ere I could utter a cry a gag was forced into my mouth. I was dashed on the ground, my eyes were covered, I felt cords tied swiftly round my hands and feet, and then I was raised up and carried away head and foot, and thrown into a wheeled carriage, which travelled briskly forward. I felt my captors unbuckling my sword and removing my pistol-belt, and heard many voices around my carriage. The bonds which secured my hands behind my back were tightened, and my feet and legs were secured anew, and I was borne once more onwards. Once there was the sound of guns afar, the litter was halted; then the booming died away. We went on and on, and I knew the sun was up, and that our pace was quickening. The heat became like that of a furnace. My nostrils were choked with dust—my breath came in spasms. The carriage stopped—I was lifted out, and I knew I stood in the shade; the rope which bound my feet was loosed, I was forced down a flight of steps by strong hands. Then came the grating of a key and the drawing of bolts—a door was opened; the cool, damp air would have been grateful had it not been so dank and fetid. I was led down steps—One! two! three! four! five! six! seven! eight! nine! ten! I counted them. Then I felt a hand busy at my wrists; I struggled to shake off the cords—the door closed with a heavy clang. I tore off the bandage from my eyes, and as I tugged at the knotted twine which held the gag to my bleeding lips, I looked around and uttered a bitter cry—for there seemed indeed no hope.

It was broad daylight, but the walls of the cell around which I gazed were rendered visible only by an iron cresset from the low roof. It was round and arched and windowless, and the sole access was by the steps down which I had just been led. At one side was a native charpoy or bed, a rude table by its side was covered with a mat, on which there was placed an earthen vessel of water, a heap of cakes, and a plate of boiled rice. I was dying of thirst and ravenous with hunger; and, as men condemned to die will make a hearty breakfast, in spite of all my misery I drank and ate. I threw myself on the bed, for my fever was strong on me again. With closed eyes I was striving to collect my thoughts, when a noise above attracted my attention. And lo! there descended from the roof, through an aperture in which the lamp was suspended, a cord, with a basket attached, which was lowered to the floor. In the basket was a bottle of wine, chupatties or native cakes, and a fowl. In the obscurity I overlooked a piece of paper; but the basket was shaken from above, and looking again I saw a little note. I read with difficulty—

“Do not quite despair. Friends are near ; though not powerful. But they may help you. Hope and be firm.”

It was a woman's hand. I looked up and whispered, “God bless you, my unknown friend. Tell me who you are. In pity, tell me where I am.” There came back a sigh for answer. The basket was shaken after a time and drawn up. Worn out and ill nigh to death, I lay down on the charpoy and slept. I was awakened, after sleeping a troubled sleep, by a sound in the vaulted room. A negro, armed to the teeth, had brought in bread, rice, and water ; at the doorway stood a Sepoy on guard. I spoke, but they made no reply to my entreaties to know where I was. “I am ill—very ill—tell my gaoler I shall very soon be beyond his power,” I cried ; “but at least, ere I die, let me know what is the news from Auripore.” No answer. The door was locked and chained, and bolted, and I was left alone.

I had never heard of the native chiefs, in this cruel war, making prisoners—at least they were reserved for slaughter we were told, though the country people often concealed fugitives and treated them kindly. I was of no consequence as a captive, but I had been pounced upon as if I were a great prize. For whom could they have mistaken me ? Who was my unknown friend ?

How years of misery were concentrated in every hour, as I walked round and round the prison, or crossed to or fro, or threw myself on the bed, and tossed my arms like a maniac ! “One day of freedom—one day of strength—give me that, and I will come back and die, if it be Thy will. But oh ! this is more than I can bear.”

And two days and nights passed. My blood now boiled, and now ran like ice through my veins—my teeth chattered with the ague fits. My gaolers came in and went out as before. I could not mark the hours, nor tell day from night, and they would not open their accursed lips. “Ah, even if I were free to-morrow, darling, I could not help you !” I cried, passionately, and dashed my clenched fist on the table.

“Do not despair,” whispered the voice from above, “I am doing my best ; but be firm.”

“Oh, my good friend, whoever you are, give me news of Auripore ; and I shall be as a rock, if you can tell me all is well.” No answer ; but a fragment of paper came fluttering through the gloom, and I could make out the words, “To-night, if possible.”

The dungeon in which I was confined was lined with a hard, white cement, and had been used as a subterranean granary, and I guessed that the aperture above was on a level with the ground floor. I dragged over the charpoy, put the table upon it, mounted ;

my hand could just reach the cresset. I made a spring, and caught the thin chain by which the lamp was suspended, heedless of the burning, and, in a momentary fit of desperate strength, was striving to climb up to the roof, when the chain gave way, and I crashed back on the frail pile I had erected, and rolled on the floor in the *débris*, in utter darkness, for the lamp was extinguished.

I regained my feet, cleared the dust and the mouldy corn from my face and hair. The guards were no doubt be alarmed at the noise. Ha ! they are here ! Fool, why could you not wait ?

The bolts were drawn, the chains clanked as they struck the massive door ; the key turned in the lock ; the door grated on its hinges and opened gently. I strained my eyes, but could see nothing.

“Where are you ?” asked a voice in English ; after a pause, “What has become of the light ?”

“I have just upset the lamp.”

“No matter ; come over and take my hand. Here.”

I groped my way towards the voice. My fingers, as I raised my hands aloft, touched the face of my deliverer, who was standing on the step, and I caught her hand and pressed it to my lips.

“Tell me to whom I owe more than my life ; surely I have heard that voice before ?”

“There is not a moment to lose ; follow me. Catch hold of my dress till we come to the light. Ali, are you there ?”

There was a response in the dark somewhere, and my guide locked, bolted, and chained the door of the cell and led the way along the passages I had descended, till we came near an open court, from which the night air blew fresh. Here we halted ; Ali, opening a bundle, wrapped me in a long white robe, put a turban on my head, and stole to the door. There was a watch-fire in the court, and the sound of hubble-bubbles warned us some of the guard were awake. The figure of my guide was muffled up so that I could not see her face ; her fingers returned the pressure, which was the mute interpretation of my gratitude.

Ali crept back, and spoke in a low voice.

“It is more than we could hope for,” she said. “Come along, and walk by my side. If we are challenged or stopped I will answer.”

She stepped into the court-yard, and I followed her. The guards turned inquiringly ; but at a gesture and a word which I could not catch, salaamed and resumed their pipes. We walked across the court to an open postern ; she led me up a flight of steps to a

long corridor ; then we descended into a chamber where a lamp was burning. My guide, after a careful survey of the tapestry which screened the paneled wall, pushed aside a slide and followed a narrow passage, choked with dust and cobwebs, till she reached an iron grating which was unlocked. We passed out into a ravine. The stars were shining aloft, as though we were in a deep well.

"This is the moat," she whispered. "Directly opposite is a flight of steps by which you will gain the top of the bank. Creep through the weeds—they are full of poisonous things ; but what can be worse than that ?" she pointed backwards with her thumb. "You speak Hindostanee ? Well ! Go straight on till you come to a pillar of stone, which you will see this clear night some way off. There you will find a guide who will lead you to a place of safety for the day. If all goes well, you may expect to see me at night, and we will fly together to our friends. I am in as much misery as you are. I am a prisoner in a dreadful captivity. I must end it one way or other ; and if I die, you will pity me."

"Mabel Fraser ! dear, dear Mab ! Nay, I know you, my deliver ! In the name of God, how came you here ? Fly with me now !"

She threw her arms round my neck.

"Oh, did I not tell you once, my poor boy, what a fate there was in store for us ? Little did I think my words would come so true. Terence, I know all now. There is one thing I *can* do—I can die for you, my brother."

"Your brother, Mabel !" I cried.

"Hush ! No time for explanation now. I will tell you all to-morrow. They have beaten us back—forgive my 'us'—if you could but know how I hate the wretches—again and again, at Auripore ; and there is scarcely any one left to guard this place. But I expect him back to-night."

"Him ! Who ?"

"Oh, go, Terence, go ! Take this in case of need. And this."

She handed me a dagger and a pistol.

"That," she went on, "is poisoned, a scratch of it will kill. That was loaded by Ali. This I shall keep, to be my last sure friend in case of need. And now, farewell ! May He have mercy and pity on us both, dear brother. I would give my life for you. If you never see me again, keep a place for me in your memory."

She tore herself from my embrace, and ran weeping up the passage. The grate closed behind her with a dull clang. A

wolf in the moat barked at the sound. Perhaps the lazy sentinel high on the wall of the bastion fancied he saw something crawl up the steps in the counterscarp, for he called out but he did not fire. And I was soon hid among the thick reeds and weeds of the glacié. I made my way towards the pillar which I discerned on the plain. As I approached a man got up from the base. I replied to his challenge with the word Mabel had given me.

He salaamed, and striking down a bye-path, turned into a jungle, through which he led me with unerring certainty. The tiger growled as we brushed past the place where he lay crunching the bones of the fawn; the hissing leopard bounded across our path; a herd of elephants, trumpeting and playing, crashed through the foliage. Things—the snake rustling the leaves at my feet, and the crouching wild beast—that would have before been terrors, were indifferent to me now. I toiled on after the silent Indian, who never stopped or tired, till the morning began to dawn, and then we came out near the edge of the jungle, where it bordered the cultivated land round a native village.

Here my guide bade me remain, and made his way cautiously towards a cottage which stood near a large tank. I watched him enter; in a few moments he returned, and, standing at the edge of the jungle, gave a long keen look all around him. Then, pointing to the cottage, he said—"Go there, sahib. It is empty; you will find food and shelter. A girl will come ere the sun sets. If any one else approach, hide beneath the old matting in the corner. But keep on the watch always. Go now. Soon the people will be stirring; it is near sunrise. To-night you will be safe."

I walked between the high green stalks of the dall, pushed aside the mat, and found myself in a small native hovel. Quite worn out, I dragged my limbs to the heap of rushes in the corner, and lay down with my hand on the trigger of the pistol. As I closed my weary eyes, I read on the silver-plated hilt, "Charles Alan Fraser." I slept.

CHAPTER LI.

THE CRISIS AND ITS END.

WHEN I awoke it was noonday—noonday in the hottest month of the Indian year. I drank gratefully from the water-jar

and ate the tough chupatties which were laid upon a leaf. I reconnoitred the scene around me through the chinks in the cabin wall.

Far as the eye could reach lay in front a wide expanse of fields spread out, studded with clumps of mangoes and dotted with trees, which loomed indistinctly in the haze, like grey clouds resting on wintry seas.

From the leaden air fell waves of heat which moved in pulse-like throbs over the sickened earth—not a cloud was visible—not a sound was heard except the shrill cry of the buzzard and the rustle of parched leaves and twigs which danced in the feverish twirl of tiny dust storms. The sun poured its fire through an atmosphere like a veil of silver cloth, which glowed with the fervour, and the undulating outlines of horizon and landscape dissolved in the intensity of its power. The lizards panted on the soil; the birds sat with open bill and protruding tongue on the lowest branches of the trees, which gave shade but not shelter.

The arched dome and whitewashed pillars of a Hindoo shrine rose above the tank at one side. At the other the belt of jungle spread to the horizon, widening as it receded. On the branches of a withered tree, a little distance from the road, a group of gorged vultures, with outspread wings and drooping heads. The skeleton of a horse, to which were attached fragments of leather and of its trappings, lay beneath the tree.

A young woman, with a pitcher on her head, was moving through the fields. As she came near the tank the notes of her sweet, monotonous song, broke the silence, and presently the rings of metal and little bells round her ankles were heard tinkling in unison with her voice, and marking the time of her footsteps. Her figure had all the grace and pliancy of the young Hindoo. Her robes of white cotton fell in easy folds from the shoulders. Bracelets of beads encircled the finely-moulded arms, one of which was upraised to the pitcher on her head. Her clear brown skin enhanced the whiteness of her teeth and the opalesque purity of the eye; and her broad, low brow was set in the massive frame of her braided hair, which shone with a blue lustre like that of the raven's wing.

With balanced tread she descended the steps to the water, and searching gently by the edge, removed a gourd from the brink; then filling the pitcher, she placed it on her head, took up the gourd, and, singing as before, walked down the narrow path. As she approached the spot where the skeleton of the horse tainted the air, disturbing the vultures with a motion of her hand, where they dreamed of horrid banquets, she threw the gourd into the

bushes. When she passed the cottage again, she placed her finger on her lip. In a few minutes she disappeared amidst the green sea of pulse.

I was sure the gourd was intended for me, but her gesture indicated fear and caution. Scarcely had she passed my hiding-place ere a man appeared at the door of the temple. He crept up to the edge of the tank, and lying down, gazed after the woman beneath his hand. Then he arose, and came towards my cabin.

A string of beads showed he was a Brahmin. His hair, partly shaven from the crown, hung from his head in tangled locks, thickened with a paste of coloured clay; an ape-like brow descended over small, dull, sunken eyes, animated by cruelty and cunning. His meagre body, daubed with yellow and white clay, was nearly naked; his finger-nails were like the talons of a wild beast.

He sniffed the air with pleasure, and, grunting out the words of a poojah or prayer, bent down, took up the hot dust and rubbed it over his neck and shoulders.

He was following the path towards the village, when a cloud of dust in the distance, like those which careered from time to time over the plain, but that it was wider at the base, and moved steadily, attracted his attention. The fakir, with a speed wonderful in one so decrepit, ran to the top of the tank, looked intently, shading his eyes with his hands, and in a moment darted into the little temple.

The cloud advanced, eating up the broad expanse of the plain, thickened and deepened, and resolved itself into a pall of dust, which rose up from a throng of men and horses. How my heart beat! But, alas! the thrill of joy was soon stilled. It was the enemy again—the cruel, pitiless enemy! No hope! The white dresses of native troopers distinct; the elephants rising above the heads of the horsemen; in their train a multitude on foot. No hope now! They directed their course towards the tank, the brown embankments of which could be seen high above the plain. Soon the confused tumult of a native march rose to the ear, the tramp and neighing of horses, the clinking of arms, the shrill trumpeting of elephants, and the angry growlings of camels. Spears and glistening shields returned a thousand rays to the sun. In a wild rush, like the mountain torrent leaping into the valley, horsemen, footmen, women and children, elephants, camels, horses, mules, dashed into the tank. Elephants, plunging their trunks low and deep, discharged the refreshing streams into their capacious gullets; camels laid in their supply, horses snorted with pleasure, the natives flung the water over their shaven heads; and as fast

as the jaded followers came up, they covered the tank-sides with a multitude, whose cries and movement offered a strange contrast to the silence but a few moments before.

A group of horsemen rode to the tree over the cabin where I lay, and dismounted close to it. They sat apart from the rest in the shade, on their carpets. The eldest was a short fat man of fifty years of age. The streaks of paint on his nose and forehead marked him as a Hindoo. In front of his large white turban sparkled an aigrette of flat, thin diamonds and large uncut emeralds; his small, deeply sunk, and rat-like eyes moved about incessantly in their narrow orbits; his broad and coarse nose, with wide nostrils, rested on a stubbly, stunted moustache, which did not conceal the straight, sensual mouth; a thick neck, which grew abruptly from his rounded shoulders, nearly hid in its fat folds a triple row of pearls and emeralds. A white muslin tunic, leaving one side of his breast exposed, was confined by a Cashmere shawl, into which was stuck a curved sabre, with a small silver handle. His legs were encased in drawers of white cotton cloth, and on the naked great toe of each small delicate foot was a silver ring. Three attendants stood with folded arms by the side of his carpet, on which were laid his slippers, a common cavalry pistol, and a box of Indian sweetmeats. A syce, holding a fine sinewy Arab, whose sides bore marks of severe punishment, remained close at hand, and another gently flapped away the flies.

The man seated next to the Hindoo seemed to be about thirty years of age, or perhaps younger. Rather over the middle height, his person combined grace and strength in a union rarely seen among the Mahomedans of India. His head was well set on a wide and sinewy chest, which fell away in rounded lines to the small muscular flank; and his limbs, compact and admirably moulded, completed the promise of vigour given by his nervous arms and hands. His turban had been removed for a small skull cap of silver tissue, beneath which fell a few shining ringlets of black hair. A broad, smooth forehead, with arched brows—a Grecian nose—a well-cut, firm mouth, an arched upper lip fringed by a full moustache—grey eyes, which shone from the bronze-coloured skin, now cold and fierce, again open and kind—altogether a face expressive of every phase of his Asiatic nature, in which the moving power was worship of his blood, which he believed to be that of the Prophet of his race, transmitted through a line of warriors and kings—the sole inheritance which had been left to him. He wore as his only ornaments, an engraved stone set in a silver ring on his finger, and a sword belt, studded with precious stones, round his waist. The third of the group was a meagre

old man, small in stature, bowed with years, with a thin, haggard Jewish face, which was made almost dignified by the massive folds of an immense white beard. The Moulvie's eyes were dim, and his fingers were busily employed in running over a string of beads, as if in want of something to do.

The fakir walked out of the temple, and with outstretched arms and the palms of his hands clasped together, advanced to the carpet. After a pause, during which the leaders surveyed the new-comer, the Moulvie asked, "And who is my brother?"

"My name is Canoujee," the Brahmin said. "Rejoiced am I to see the conquering army of their mightinesses in this oppressed country, who have no doubt killed all the infidels in Oude."

A grunt from the party was the only reply.

"There was a great fight," the fakir continued, "here two nights ago. A party of feringshees, flying perhaps from the face of their highnesses, drew up here to water their horses. But I crept to the village, and brought out the bowmen and the matchlockmen, and we set upon the infidels and slew them, though they fought like demons; and fired as from a regiment so many shots that none could approach. And three of the people are now lying wounded and one is dead from the fight." The fakir pointed with his forefinger to the withered tree, on which the vultures were seated. "The bones of one lie scattered there. Who would touch them but dogs and jackals and the vultures? Others rode away towards the east, just able to sit on their horses—dead, surely, ere this."

"Have you got nothing," asked the Mussulman, "by which we may know who these feringshees were?"

The fakir went into the temple, and returned, carrying a linen bag. "In this," said he, "are things which they left in their flight. I do not know the language of the infidel." He poured out the contents on the grass. A silver flask, a small clasped book, bound in green velvet, embossed and edged in gold, a hunting-knife, a glove, and a little leather case.

The Mussulman took up the book, and tried to unclasp it; he pored over the letters raised in gold on the cover.

"Where is the sahib?" asked he. "If he were here he would tell us what this means."

"Why disturb the sahib, Prince?" said the old moulvie. "Has he not toiled in the fight and in the saddle enough to-day?"

"It is always thus with our good moulvie," said the other speaker with some bitterness. "He is of opinion that the white-faced follower he has won for the Prophet is worth all the rest of us. He is always thinking of his deeds and singing his praises. When

he is in no hurry, time stands still—when *he* is in haste, time is asleep.”

“My son,” rejoined the moulvie, “I am just. Be thou so too, oh Prince! and leave jealousies which destroy us. Is the sahib your slave, that he should come running to be your interpreter at the beck of your servants?”

One of the attendants, salaaming humbly, exclaimed, “My lords, the Sahib Bahadoor is coming!” and at the same time held his hand in the direction of a man who was walking by the side of his horse with quick, vigorous steps towards the shade.

He was not of the race of the Hindoo or the Mussulman—that could be seen even afar by his solid heavy tread, his powerful limbs, and the swing of his arms.

He came near. And within a few yards of me I recognized with a shudder—Alan Fraser! In complexion he was nearly as dark as a native, but his hair was uncut, and flowed in grey locks over his shoulders; a heavy sabre was slung by a broad belt over his shoulder, and his waist-belt held two double-barrelled pistols. He took a cheroot out of his case, and flung himself down on the ground in the shade. No one spoke as his servant applied the coal to the end of his cheroot, and after a few vigorous puffs, he broke silence abruptly.

“I saw the skeleton of a horse, with foreign shoes on its hoofs, down there. They tell me in the village they killed some feringhees—cowardly brutes! But it’s well to get rid of the vermin any way, and that way was best suited to our friends.”

“My son!” interrupted the old moulvie, “these poor people may have done the cause a good service. See!—Read! and tell us what this writing is.”

Fraser turned over lazily on the grass to take the case from the moulvie’s hand. He opened the catch after he had languidly glanced at the outside. With a bound he stood erect, and holding the case at arm’s length, smote his thigh with vehemence; his eyes glared, the veins of his neck and face swelled full of the fierce currents from his wicked heart. With a coarse imprecation he shouted out, in Hindostanee, “By —— it’s he!—It’s he! Where was this found? Whose is this? Speak, you ——!”

“What is it, my son?” inquired the old moulvie.

“What is it—what is it?” Fraser roared. “Ask me no questions till mine are answered.”

The fakir could only articulate, “Sahib, it was found by me on the ground near the tank, the night we killed the infidels.”

“Did you kill the man who owned this? *Did* you kill him?” shouted Fraser.

"Alas ! how can I tell who owned it :—the case and the book, and the other things, were found on the ground."

Fraser read and re-read the words, dashing from his brows the drops of perspiration, and worked his fingers in the ends of his moustache.

"Lead me to the place where you killed these feringhees !" The fakir followed him, and as he strode towards the skeleton of the horse, the Hindoo broke silence : "These people are wonderful ! What can he see in bones ?—they cannot speak."

"Have you not learned yet, O Mightiness ! that the sahibs know things of which you know nothing ?" asked the Prince, scornfully. "See ! he has made some discovery, even among the dumb bones !"

Fraser returned with the letter in his hand. "Do you know what this is ?" he asked. "Listen to me. Here is a copy of an order, containing instructions to the enemy who are hunting you down on every side. All the measures against us are the work of one man. And this man is my bitterest foe, as well as yours. Think you, Prince, that it was for love of your cause I gave up all that bound me to my race ? that I became an outcast, flying with a cowardly rabble from the very shadows of my countrymen ; and I—with a greater fear than the greatest coward of you all at my heart—that I toiled at Cawnpore, at Delhi, at Lucknow, in the midst of traitors ? No ! But I have hate as strong as yours ! Reverend gentlemen like the fakir are subject to little aberrations. When he told me he and his friends had killed these infidels, I naturally doubted. I have looked. The bones of no European lie on that plain ! The horse of the man who owned that letter and that book was killed. *He may* have been wounded ; any way he cannot be far. Alive or dead, we must have that man. Let us act at once. Search every house, every bush, every inch of ground. *He must* be found !"

"Sahib," said the Prince, who preserved an unconcerned air, but had kept a keen eye on the speaker, "who is this man ?"

"Is not the paper I hold enough for you ? Is he not the trusted agent of the enemy ? And does he not know you all better than you know yourselves ?"

The pistol, with "Charles Alan Fraser" on the hilt, was grasped more firmly now.

"Yes, yes ! he is right !" said the Hindoo. "Let us search for the infidel—let us drive the jungle. It is late, and we should lose no time ; orders and arrangements should be made at once."

And the Hindoo arose with alacrity and was about to mount

his horse, when the sowars, posted on the verge of a field in rear of the camp, came at full speed towards the temple, shouting out—"The enemy! the enemy! the feringhees are coming!"

In an instant the cooking-places were deserted, the brass pots gathered up, the uncooked rice overset; the elephants and camels untethered in headlong haste, the tawdry tents struck; women and children screamed; camp followers ran to load their beasts; horsemen forced the bits into the jaws of their steeds and sprung into their saddles. Those who were eating dropped the handful of food into the dish, seized their turbans, wound them on, lighted the matches of their guns, or examined flints and priming. At the first alarm, Fraser mounted and rode to a mound near the temple, whence he returned, after a long look, to the agitated chiefs near me.

"What do you see?" asked the sirdar, impatiently.

"Prince Feroze! The feringhees are coming, sure enough. Three strong squadrons, the same who left their mark on us at daylight! Certainly, they are anxious we should not over-eat ourselves."

"Have they guns? Have they infantry?"

"Guns I cannot see; and surely your Highness cannot think that after such an exhilarating run as we had this morning, the feringhee infantry could be so near us except by magic."

"Then why shall we not fight? Three squadrons—three hundred men? Why we have nearly five hundred good sowars and two hundred sepoy, besides matchlock men!"

"Look, Prince, and see where the sowars and sepoy are."

The camp fires threw up little whirling columns of smoke into the air, through which might be seen figures vanishing, and as far as the eye could reach the plain was dotted with a mass of fugitives, the front of which had already reached the horizon, carrying with it a cloud of dust. The old priest was standing in front of a line, which did not consist of more than forty troopers. He had a pair of large horn spectacles on his nose, and with a deep guttural voice chanted forth the fiery verses of the Koran which promise eternal life and eternal delights to those who die for the faith.

"Cowards! curses on them!" shouted the Prince, savagely. "Let us stand here and die. I am tired of flying!"

"Were we but sure of dying, Prince, I should not decline your proposal," replied Fraser. "But I have a decided objection to being hanged like a dog, and I do not suppose your Excellency would desire to go out of the world smeared with the fat of swine. They must be crippled indeed," he continued, after another look at the enemy. "They surely made us out long ago."

"Oh! it is too bad," said the Prince; "it is too bad, that now, when we have a chance of sending the infidels to perdition—when we might have wiped away some of our disgrace——"

"Yes, indeed, Prince. They are but a few English and Sikhs. But the fact is, the sepoys and matchlockmen are running away very fast. Therefore, Prince, as you, the stout gentleman you call the Peishwa, the old moulvie, and myself, with a few horse, are scarce able to hold the ground, why we had better leave it. And perhaps," looking through his glass again, "the sooner the better, for our friends having had a short halt to reconnoitre, are now coming on pretty fast."

Taking his horse from his syce and mounting as he spoke, Fraser rode from the mound.

"God is great," chanted the Moulvie in a sonorous voice. "He has spoken. Destroy those who refuse to acknowledge that God is God, and that Mahomet is his prophet! Let those who obey be spared! But do thy work as God has appointed and He will reward thee! Death for the faith is life eternal! Death for the faith opens to you the heaven of heavens where God rewards——"

As the troopers, grave middle-aged men, were listening with flashing eyes to the rolling words of their priest, the Prince, placing his hand on the old man's shoulder, said sadly, "Alas! not now, not now, good moulvie! We must still bear our sorrows below, for those who are coming may not do us the favour of killing us in battle. The unclean dogs may rather seek to add a new terror to death and to deprive us of heaven. The sepoys are gone—the Hindoo is ready to fly."

As he uttered the last words a murmur rose from the Mussulman troopers, "Yes, the Hindoo! the Peishwa is flying and all his men!"

The Moulvie mounted, and with his party followed the runaways. They passed through the *débris* of the camp—over cooking-places in which the fires were still burning—through picket stakes and ropes, over fragments of clothing and old shoes, and then broke into a gallop. When they had got quite clear of the broken ground they gave spur to their horses, as if by common impulse, and swept by the side of the jungle at full speed.

Scarcely had the last man rode off ere I bounded out of the cabin and flew to the top of the tank frantic with the excitement and tension of the danger I had been suffering. They were coming; but oh! how slowly! I shaded my eyes—I watched the tardy column, when a shrill cry caused me to turn my head. I was in time to escape a blow aimed at me by the fakir, who had crept out from the temple behind me. The cry was from

the Hindoo girl, at whom he made a thrust of his knife, and he dived into the tank just as I fired. Once more he appeared, dived again, and rising climbed the bank at the other side, unhurt from my eager fire, and dashed into the zone of corn that surrounded the hamlet. The girl, pointing with alarm to the advancing horse, fled into the cabin.

CHAPTER LII.

SAVED AGAIN.

AS I stood in my strange attire in the centre of the group of officers of Dobson's Horse—for it was no other than the very regiment which had so miraculously saved me—received congratulations on my escape, and answered eager questions respecting my capture, captivity, deliverance, and recent peril, the air of dejection on the faces of Dobson, Beecher, and their comrades, prepared me for bad news.

"What of Auripore, Colonel?" I asked at length. "You know how anxious I am, and will excuse me interrupting you."

"We have got into Auripore."

"Oh, that is indeed joyful! And Sir Denis and the garrison?"

"You shall hear all the news presently, never fear. But at present——"

"Only one word," I interrupted once more. "Is Sir Denis Desmond safe? Can you tell me anything of the women—of Miss Butler? If you knew, gentlemen, how I feel——"

"The nuisance of it is, we can tell nothing positive. The fact is, that we made rather a hash of the relief. We were with Potter's column, which moved down on the east side; that old woman, Muddell, should have cut off the rebels on the west, so as to force them over the Raptée into Nepaul, or drive them south into the arms of Mullit's corps. The garrison was reduced to the lowest ebb, and, hang me, if Sir Denis Desmond and old Tickler didn't make a sortie, go slap through the enemy's camp, and get clear away before we appeared before the place."

"Bravo! Thank God."

"Wait a bit, Doctor. They struck out for Muddell's Division, but the wretched muff was humbugged by false reports of an enemy in his rear, and halted two marches off. Of course Tickler left his guns behind him, and had few horse, and, when the rebels recovered their surprise, they set out in a furious rage after the little

column, which had a terrible time of it, fighting and marching in such weather, harassed by thousands of scoundrels. Tickler, with the main body, fortunately stumbled on Mullit's cavalry, but the Commissioner and a few troopers, relying on their knowledge of the country, separated from the column, and managed to reach the Commander-in-Chief's camp."

"Thank God, once more!"

"Yes. But then, again, Sir Denis, as soon as he had seen His Excellency, set out with instructions for Mullit's Division, as he was anxious to go with it to Beel, where it is to proceed, now that Auripore is free, to liberate the women, who, as we heard only three days ago, were cut off from Agra, and were shut up there by the Rohilcund rebels. He has not been seen since, and up to last night had not reached Mullit. We fear very much he has come across some of the bands we have broken up, and which are scattered in all directions. Their game is nearly over. You have just seen the most dangerous enemies we have—Feroze and the Moulvie of Lucknow. Much as I should have liked to bag them, we would all be most pleased with the sight of that treble-dyed traitor, apostate, and villain, Fraser, swinging from that tree. However, their time will come, one and all. Eustace," he continued, "send a line to the Brigadier, and ask if we shall fall back and join the column as soon as horses and men are rested. You shall see Auripore, in which you are so much interested, Mr. Brady, to-morrow night. I hope by the time we get there we shall have news of the safety of the poor women in Beel."

"And what, sir," I asked, "is to be done about Sir Denis Desmond?"

"Oh! we trust he will turn up. A knowing old bird like him with a clear head and his wits about him is not easily caught."

The fakir's story, Fraser's excitement, suddenly flashed across me. I arrested Dobson's attention at once.

"By all means let us look for the missing man. It may be as you think. How lucky if it should be so!"

An active search was made by the troopers. All in vain—there was no trace of the owner of the dead horse; but that it was shod in the European fashion was clear. The articles the fakir had exhibited were gone. The gourd! There might be something there. I walked to the place. The gourd was trampled and broken up by a horse's hoof, but I found in it a piece of paper rolled up, which I opened, and I read:—

"Who are you? I am a countryman, not far distant. We are in great peril. Beware of the fakir. You may trust the bearer. Put your reply in here.—D. D."

I uttered a shout, and ran to Dobson with my prize.

"Sir Denis Desmond is somewhere near us, Colonel ! See this paper. He is not far off. This is his handwriting. I know it well."

Beecher, Eustace, and myself galloped through the dall towards the hamlet, and came in sight of a little group of natives. I recognized the figure of the old Indian who had acted as my guide. Two women and a tall man followed him dressed like peasants. They were advancing to meet us. We drew near. You may imagine my pleasure when I heard Sir Denis's well-known voice exclaim—"Mabel, cheer up ! We are saved. All is right now. And is it possible—you, Terence ! you here ?"

Mabel could only give a little cry—"There is Terence," and fainted away. I leaped to the ground, and took the exhausted girl in my arms. She had travelled all day in the heat of the sun. Her tender little feet were cut and bleeding, and full of thorns.

We bore her tenderly to the cottage, for indeed life was very feebly holding its own in that delicate little frame. Water was brought ; and Mab, opening her eyes for a moment, as if to assure herself of the reality of her safety, closed them again, and, as she clung to me, sobbing, "My dear brother !" and no more, the tears of thankfulness and joy rolled down her cheeks, furrowing the dye which disguised their whiteness.

When Sir Denis, after an interview with Dobson, who was delighted at his rescue, came to us, he found her fast asleep, with her arm round my neck.

"And Mary—your niece I mean, sir—Miss Butler ?"

"She is safe in Beel ; and we shall see her in two days. I never knew her obstinate—indeed, disobedient is the right word—before. It was only in compliance with my positive orders she consented to leave Aripore ; and God knows what I should have done had I not insisted. She never could have got away with us, or borne the fatigues we underwent."

"And you, sir !"

"And I ! To find ourselves hiding for our lives within a few hundred yards of each other in a hamlet on the borders of the Terai ! What an escape we have both had ! And what an adventure this would be for a novel !"

His horse was shot under him ; the obscurity of the night enabled him to creep away and hide in the jungle. In the morning he secured a villager, by a promise of a thousand rupees, to try to get him away, or inform any of the columns which were scouring the north of Oude and Rohilcund of his danger.

Ramdeen repaired to the Fort of Roab, where he knew Mabel Fraser was in charge of the Nawab, but she could do nothing. Assured, however, of the man's fidelity and of that of his daughter, she contrived the plan for my escape. The surprise of Sir Denis when Mabel, on the point of death, was carried in by the peasant and his daughter, can scarcely be imagined. Then came the alternations of hope and fear, despair and joy for us both. I told him my story; and when, speaking low, I said I had seen Alan Fraser that very day among the rebels, an expression of anger and scorn passed over his face, which turned to pity as he pointed to the sleeping girl.

"Do not mention his name to *her*. Unfortunate child! She is the only creature on earth who cares for him; and even now she would be by his side had he not wished to make her abjure her faith and marry the Nawab of Roab! We must guard her now, Brady."

"Roab? Roab? Why that is the name of the place where I was carried off."

"I suspect Fraser was at the bottom of it. You know the Ranee, your precious mother, is in the field with the rebels!"

"Alas! I do, sir. I saw her just as I saw Alan Fraser."

"You saw your mother!—you? Where, in Heaven's name? And how are you alive?"

"The night I joined Dobson's Horse, when the camp was surprised, she led the sowars. She was within two yards of me. I beheld her face distinctly. She is still very, very beautiful."

"And what did they do?"

"They carried off a wounded European, whom I did not see—a man our cavalry picked up on the ground that morning. He was not killed, but they put him in a litter and carried him away most tenderly."

"Who on earth could he have been? No one knows, you say? God help him, whoever he is—in the claws of the tigress indeed! We must only hope it was no one we care about."

I marched on foot beside poor Mabel's litter. She, the timid little creature whom I had so much distrusted, clung to me and told me of all her sorrows. But whilst the fate of Mary was doubtful I could not take any interest in my half-sister's confidences, not even when, most astounding of all, she asserted that Maurice Prendergast had come to Oude from Persia, whither he had gone in the Russian employ after the Crimean war, and had joined the rebels, with whom he was serving as one of their most trusted leaders at her father's instigation.

The next afternoon our troops halted on a plain watered by a deep river.

"You can just see the top of the Residency of Auripore from this," said Sir Denis.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE MEETING AND THE PARTING.

AS the evening was fine, I mounted my pony and rode over to Auripore at sunset. The town was deserted, but there was a mendicant at the gate who directed me to the palace. It was surrounded by high walls. The garrison held, however, only the Rajah's palace, the Commissioner's residence, and some large houses which they had fortified and enclosed with a rampart.

I gave my horse to the syce, telling him I would walk back to the camp, and made my way towards the gilt cupolas, which bore marks of the rebels' artillery. I need not recount all I saw in my ramble through the shattered house of the Rajahs of Auripore. I entered the court-yard. There was the open gallery described by Harness; the steps, the corridor, the site of the throne, the spot where Sir Denis had exposed the contriver of the clever plot to defeat, ignominy, and shame. I entered the rooms of state—of what once had been state—all tawdry and faded now; passed through long galleries and chambers neglected and covered with the mortar and rubbish brought down from the walls and ceilings by shot or bursting shells, and came to the harem or Zenanah. I was curious to see if there was any trace left of the last "Ranee of Auripore," to judge with my own eyes what sort of existence it was which such a restless pleasure-loving being could have passed in that seclusion. But these nests of rooms gave me no clue to the life of the banished inmates. They were nearly empty; the furniture and hangings decayed and worthless. In one apartment, however, there was a carpet on the floor, a sofa, several ottomans, table and writing materials, and by the envelopes and fragments of papers lying about I conjectured it had been occupied by one of the officers of the garrison during the siege. I sat down for a moment, pondering over the events which had so thronged upon me. I had had little time for reflection. I fell into one of my reveries and my fancy wandered in this deserted palace, full of strange interest for me, till I fell into a gentle sleep. It must have been late when I woke up, for it was pitch dark, and I

started at finding myself alone. I rose and groped my way across the room. All at once I stopped. I heard footsteps coming along the passage towards the door by which I had entered! My recent peril had not made me cautious as it ought,—it flashed across me that I might have been tracked by some lurking enemy. More than one of our officers had lost his life lately in the course of careless rambles through the streets of apparently deserted cities. What a fool I am! I ran to the opposite door—it was locked! I hastened to fasten that which led into the room the way I had come, that I might stand at bay till I knew who were these visitors. But ere I could reach it the door was pushed open—And there stood before me—the “Ranee of Auiripore!” My mother was face to face with me again! She held a lamp in one hand, and at the sight of a European she uttered an exclamation, clapped her hand to her girdle, and as I dropped my hand, quite aghast, she was about to fire, when a voice exclaimed, “Highness! ’tis your son!”

She looked at me doubtingly for a moment, advanced, and held the light towards my face, and said—“Is Mohun right? Are you indeed Terence Brady, my son?”

“Unhappy mother! May Heaven forgive you! My life is in your hands. But, madam, such son as you deserve to have, I am to you.”

I turned away my eyes. I could not bear to look at her. The original of the picture—still lovely exceedingly, though time and fierce passions had left their impress on her face—was standing with her eyes fixed upon me. She was dressed like a native gentleman of high rank. On her head she wore a turban, in front of which there was a diamond and emerald aigrette, over the immense folds of her hair, which fell on her shoulders. The folds of her dress, on neck, and arms, wrist and waist, revealed jewels of price, and even on her boots there glittered spurs set with gems.

“And is it thus we meet, my son, after so many years of absence?” she asked, in a wailing submissive tone. “Look at me, Terence! Will you not look at your own mother? What wrong have I done you? Am I thus deprived of the sole ray of hope which reconciled me to life the first time you see me?”

“I *have* seen you before, madam,” I gasped; “I saw you the night you rode into our camp with your robbers, and carried away the wounded man. I know all about you, too. Yes! I have heard of your doings till I am sick; and I tell you now that it will be my duty to see you do not escape—that is,—I think I ought not to let you go. I am an officer——”

My voice choked me. I could not proceed.

“‘You are an officer,’ and you were going to say you would arrest me. I thought you were only a doctor. I am quite safe here. It is *you* who are in danger. But not a hair of your head shall be touched. Do whatever you like, only be reasonable, my son. Come! Do not shrink from me. At least, let us understand what is between us to cause a quarrel. Let us sit down. It is Kismet that wills our meeting. There is no fear of interruption. Mghun!” she added, in Hindostanee, “tell Azimoolah I shall not be ready for some time. Let him see the sentries keep a good watch, to warn us if they are moving in the camp.”

I turned my head from her still, but ah! I did not resist, as she led me to the sofa, fondling my hand in hers.

“How tall you are!” she said, “but not so strong as you promised to be. You look unhappy. I wish you would let me take a good peep at your face again. What! not one little peep?”

She passed her arm round my waist. I felt the scales of her armour as she leant her head on my shoulder. I gently pushed her away.

“After so many years you thus reject your poor broken-hearted mother. Be it so,” she said, with a sigh of resignation. “I cannot help it. What are you angry with me for? What have I done?”

No answer.

“Is it because I did not go with you to misery and poverty, but preferred being away for a little that I might make you rich?”

No answer. That wonderful voice spoke again.

“Terence! your father deceived me. He told me I should be rich, and I—riches were all I thought of. Do you know, or care to know, why? Will you listen while I tell you what my life has been? Oh, Terence! why *should* I not have made wealth my only object? Yes! When I was a neglected child, running wild among natives in my father’s compound, I was so nursed in poverty, and ground down in it, that I believe if the most hideous djin came to me ere I was sixteen years old, and said, ‘Mary Billing, if you marry me, I will give you untold gold, but you shall be damned when you die,’ I would not have hesitated a moment. You shrink from me again! But *you* don’t know what it is to be a poor white in India; to be a woman—a lady—and to be scorned and trampled on! I was beautiful—so much the worse for me. But could I help it? And the more noticed and petted I was the more pain I felt. My poor miserable father! How he was jeered at and ridiculed for his poverty, and made a jest of in

every station over India ! How I cursed them when night after night he was brought to our wretched home the most horrid of all beasts—a human being maudlin and drunk ! I was taken out as ornament to evening parties by your fine ladies, and I heard for ever in my ears—‘Daughter of poor Beery Billing, you know.’ I had dresses given to me in charity : I lived on charity when my hapless father died. I had no education—no religion—as you call it. Ram and Shiva, Mahomet and the Virgin, Vishnu and the Trinity were all mingled in my head together. Who taught me anything ? The teaching I received was the groundwork of the gossip of the bazaar, and of my early life among native servants, or the sayings and doings of the cantonment. I had one tutor—his name was Want, and it was bare cold charity alone saved me from starvation or worse. And I looked around the world whilst I was yet a child—for I could see in my own way ; and I saw that whilst you all pretend that you worship God, your idol is Gold. What did you all come to India for ? For the good of the natives, whose temples you let go to ruin, whose tanks you allow to fall into decay, whose works perish before your eyes, without a thought for their feelings or a regard for their wounded pride ? —Bosh ! The young misses came to be married to gold, and the men came to get gold. Do you make what you call your improvements for the love of the natives or of gold ? Are they not to improve commerce, and to enable you to control the country all the better by force, as you can’t do it by love, that you may turn it to profit still ? You talk of the zenanahs and harems, and habits of the people—pah ! I tell you, Terence, I know them, and I know, too, what are the manners of our stations. I have been told what Christian princes and nobles are, and I swear to you the great difference between you and them is, that you are hypocrites and that they are not. Well ! I resolved to be rich—to be so at any cost. Your father—a brave, wild-brained fellow—was not rich, I knew, but he would succeed to Lough-na-Carra, and he might have Kilmoyle. He swore it to me. I had lovers innumerable, but I looked at them only in one way—what they had to bring me. I openly announced that as my principle. Of them all I cared for only one, and he is now the being I most hate ! You know him. When I think I at one time loved him, it makes me doubt my being the same creature.”

“And Sir Denis Desmond ? You say nothing of him, madam.” The scales of the steel corset grated as her bosom heaved.

“Denis Desmond ! *You* have heard that, then ? Woman that I am, what would I not give to meet you once more, Denis ! And we will—I know it.”

The tigress was becoming aroused ; I moved away a little from her.

“ No ; hear me out, Terence Brady ! Denis Desmond insulted and wronged me, and by his cruelty caused my life to be what you see it ! He it was who caused my father’s claims on Oude to be rejected by the Government ! He it was who had my father turned forcibly out of the station by jeering chuprassees as a public cheat—who trampled on the old man—Colonel Billing, a gentleman and a soldier, in his insolent pride, as if he were a mehter or a pariah ! In the old man’s crying fits he was always blubbering about satisfaction from Desmond, and cursing him ; and asking me to avenge him ; and in my childish sorrow I vowed to aid him, for I loved that poor drunken fond old man. At this time the great Commissioner had not seen me. When he did, he was my slave. I never can forget my triumph ! But he was not an abject slave, this insolent clerk—what better was he ? He talked of moderation, proposed my remaining for two or three years in a state of seclusion with some friends of his—till ‘ I completed my education,’ forsooth !—of allowances and pocket-money. I kept *that* string to my bow for the pleasure of *cutting* it.” She paused for a moment and startled me with a laugh. “ He had his revenge, and in this very place too, my son. Desmond is clever ! Have you heard what he did ? ”

“ I know the story, madam ; I wonder you allude to it. When I tell you I have heard everything about your residence here, perhaps you will spare yourself and me these shameful details.”

“ Shameful ! What do you mean, Terence Brady ? There’s nothing to be ashamed of—no, nothing ! ” she exclaimed, fiercely, “ nothing except my own idiotic folly in giving way to my most foolish love for that most vile of villains, Alan Fraser. If you think me to blame for leaving you, blame him. If you think me to blame for all I have done or ever can do, blame him ! Ay, and curse him too ! He was my evil genius ; the Wicked One has not a blacker heart. He put it into my head to send you home ; I had some jewels and some little money left, and he swore he would make me rich, and that he would treat you as his son. Well, I listened, and was lost. Our marriage, as I believed it, was kept a secret, but not so the marriage he made soon after we arrived at Hyderabad with a girl whose ugliness was so great, no one but Charley would face it, notwithstanding all her rupees. And when I claimed my position, and I, who was about to be a mother, demanded to be acknowledged as his wife, the ruffian overwhelmed me by the enormity of his infamy and the greatness of my ruin. Whatever I may have been before, I became then——what I am.”

She burst into tears, and sobbed bitterly.

"'Tis her art," thought I—"do not be deceived."

After a little she went on:—"I was stupefied. I was ignorant, friendless: I had no one to go to. I would have appealed to Denis Desmond, but his last letter cut me to the quick. The proofs of my folly and of Fraser's deceit were too plain. Charley had played his game; he had hired a deserter named Shorter to act as a priest; he had taken all my little hoard. I will not tell you, my son, what proposals he made to me. But whatever you have heard, believe what I swear to you, that from that instant Fraser and I were apart for ever, and that on my side there was a hate which not the lives of a thousand such as he could satiate."

"He is a cursed villain. But I entreat you, madam, to speak like a woman."

"Like a woman I speak, my son—a wronged and outraged woman, who is the scorn of her children and their shame, but who has still a woman's feelings and a mother's heart"—(the cuirass creaked again). "I accepted his offer to be presented to the Rajah of Auripore. It opened me a chance of escape from the wretch I detested. I could sing and play, and knew the poems and verses which the native princes like. You need not draw back nor start! You need not, I tell you, Terence, be ashamed of me, or of him! That poor, plundered, outraged Prince, was a gentleman and a man of honour! I wish my Christian friends were like him. But he was rendered miserable by the degradation imposed on him. He was brave and generous, fond of the chase, and longed for an active career worthy of the descendant of a line of soldier-kings. You offered him a chance in a native regiment, in which he might, if lucky, become a captain, and yet be subject to the impertinence of the latest-imported white-faced boy! Civilization and Christianity came to him in the shape of brandy, tobacco, and French prints; and a man who might have filled a place in the history of his country died an unknown half-idiotic sot! But, Terence, he married me by all the rites sacred in his eyes and in the eyes of his people! And he made me Ranee of Auripore. I had a right to adopt a child, as he had a right to marry me. And Denis Desmond robbed me of my right! What are treaties—what——"

"I am not prepared to argue the point," I interrupted. "Is it not enough to know they have been decided finally years ago? Who was it, madam, who made an attempt on the life of Sir Denis Desmond, and who was a murderer in intent? Will you answer me that?"

"If you mean me," she replied, haughtily, "I say you are wrong. But suppose it were, had I not just cause? You don't think so. Then there never was justice executed on a plunderer and a robber. But I tell you it was not I, though Fraser I dare say persuaded Sir Denis it was. Ask who planned the deed, and who, if it had succeeded, was prepared for a rising with his sowars and the pillage of the place, whilst he would have got rid of me and others, and I will answer—Alan Fraser!"

"But you were the associate of this man—you were for years the partner of his guilt?"

"Yes! I was aware of his guilt and his crimes; but what could I do? My name was gone. I was poor. I, at any hazard, must be rich, and I used him as my tool whilst he thought he was using me. For oh, Terence! much as you may doubt it, I loved my children. When, by that villain's cruelty, I found my infant daughter was to be branded with a name which would bring on her the scorn of the world—I could not bear that my child should be punished for her mother's folly! There were ways and means of doing it. I executed a plan which I have ever since repented. I had the children changed whilst the woman who called herself Mrs. Fraser was on her dying bed. Mabel Fraser is your sister."

"I know it, madam. It was a pretty trick. And what, may I ask you, became of the child you took away?"

"It died young. I have heard my father say that whom the gods love die young. Oh! I assure you I took every care of it! The poor little creature was swept over with its nurse when you were saved. Will you believe it? Alan Fraser could tell it is true. For more than a month I scarcely slept or cared for life till the news came that you were safe. I laughed at the grief over my supposed loss. But that stratagem bound me to the author of all my misery! He refused to let me see my child unless I lent myself to his plots. And I was made his puppet and his creature, and exposed to the contumely of every station at which we were—falsely and most injuriously. Oh! swear me on the most sacred books—he could not deny it! He sought to force from me the money I had acquired from my second husband the Rajah—he threatened to accuse me of the attempt on the Resident's life, of the murder of his own wife by poison—of the murder of the stolen child. But I was becoming more of a match for him. I put my treasure beyond his control, and settled it on you, my son! Yes! on *you*, every penny except a few thousand rupees to Mabel! She was taught not to care for me, and she will come into property by right of her mother. Is not that well done? In the

event of your death all would go to Mabel—to trustees, at least ; my London lawyers made all that secure. I was his last hope ;—and oh, ye gods ! how I enjoyed my revenge ! Can you blame me, my son ? Oh ! his rage when he discovered he was deceived in his turn now. He had relied on the Rajah's money to pay his debts. He was disgraced—brought to court-martial, and ruined, as he had ruined many a better man. In the crash Sir Denis took poor Mabel ; Charley Fraser hated me too much to give me the pleasure of keeping my daughter—I could not insist on it. How did I know how she might look on a mother who did not bear her father's name ? I was reconciled by the idea of the fair, pretty child—who is somewhat like me—making a good match ; I thought now and then of her marrying Denis Desmond's nephew and becoming mistress of Kilmoyle. You see it would be a little revenge on Sir Denis when he knew who *she* was, if she married Gerald Desmond ! I abandoned the idea I entertained of proving your title to the estates by the advice of my lawyers ; but I bought you, Terence, a place not far off, as you will find when Mrs. Allayne's trustees execute her will. Charley Fraser did not threaten ; but I knew his black heart, and when he started for Europe the first time I was sure your life was not safe. He calculated that if anything happened to you I would leave my money to my daughter Mabel, and he might get the use of it. He was then menaced on all sides. You had an escape. I followed Fraser to Ireland the second time. He was now a desperate criminal. When I employed others to guard you I had nigh lost you. He knew the ways of Europe and I did not, and he very nearly capped all his outrages as I was taking steps to deliver him to justice. But oh, Terence ! he struck me a cruel blow in his flight. He carried off my daughter—he has her in his power, and although I have saved her lover's life, I fear now his last act of villainy is yet to be done, when all seems lost for us."

"Mabel Fraser is safe, madam. She is now with Sir Denis Desmond in camp over there."

The Ranee looked at me—her eyes fixed with an expression of alarm and doubt. She passed her hand over her brow.

"So ! It is so, then ? I would not have done it, wretch that he is, had I known Mabel was free. It is too late now—Kismet ! —Tell me, Terence, how know you this ?"

"But a few nights ago I was carried off, bound hand and foot, and cast into a dungeon in the fortress of Roab."

"Yes ! Fraser was there with the Nawab ! He wanted Mabel to sacrifice herself to him, and I was resolved to see her free, and

in doing so it might be necessary—to dispose of him. And he seized on you too? Oh, he plotted well indeed! My two children in his power, he thought he was sure of me! Miserable traitor and villain!—his plots are over now! Feroze never breaks his word.” She sat with her eyes on the ground. “Is it not most strange,” she said, as if to herself, “that Mabel should restore Terence to his people—that she should meet Sir Denis Desmond in a jungle in India! within a few hours! And that they are now a few miles apart from me!”

She leant with her head on one hand, and the forefinger resting on the angle of her lip—her eyes fixed in sad abstraction on the lamp. Her other hand crept gently to my arm, slid up—and up—till her fingers played idly in my hair.

“It is Kismet,” she sighed. “You do not believe in Kismet? Whatever happens is Kismet or Fate. But none can tell what will take place, and Fate is *only* Fate when it has been accomplished. Ah! who can say what fate is in store for me? I feel my last hour is not far distant.” Her lip quivered and her eye moistened. “But I can meet it now. My children are safe—I fear my persecutors no more!”

“Mother!” cried I, in excessive grief and passionate pity, “come! come with me. Fly from these wretches—murderers, rebels, and assassins. Come with me, I entreat you—they will pardon you—Sir Denis will forgive you. Come and live with your children. Do; on my knees I implore you. For the love of Heaven!”

The poor, lonely, sinful woman—how can I tell how she was wronged?—pressed her lips upon my forehead, and pressed back my hair to look into my face.

“There is comfort in this, indeed!” It was a voice which sighed like the last trill of some sweet song. “I feel as if my death would be happier if it could be now—now, in your arms. But no, I could not live among you even if I would, my children. Terence! it is no use,” she added firmly. “My outlandish ways would not be your ways. I have seen your country. It cannot be mine. My reputation would cling to me. But what am I talking of? I *cannot* leave my people, Terence. I am a Queen! I have sworn an oath; I will not and cannot prove false to it, and I must live and die among my people. I tell you why I came here—It was Kismet which willed our meeting, although I was not going to let you leave India without telling you my story in my own way, and seeing you, my son! Our cause is lost. In this room there is enough of treasure to render me rich—to support my followers. I am going to seek refuge in Nepaul. The Russian

Prendergast, whom you know—poor Mab fell in love with him whilst he was commanding the Nawab of Roab's levies—is, I hope, safe there already. When I pounced upon your camp it was in order to save him—that was all my doing, and well done, I think, too!—I heard he had been wounded in a squabble between my people and the Nawab's, and had fallen into your hands. They suspected him of treachery, and perhaps they were right. In fact, he was fainthearted in the cause; he was disgusted with our cruelties, he said, and Fraser's conduct made him look on himself with horror. He does not care much for dear Mab, I fear, but she tended him when he was all but dead, and gratitude is as mighty as love. As soon as his wounds are healed he will go to the United States. Well, Terence, well? Do you not pity me now? Do you hate me still? Oh, my son! But for *that* I would care no more for life!"

My heart was too full to speak. I had been warned against her falsehood and her wiles; and yet I could not refuse some credence to her tale. And her voice came to me through the night as I sat by her side, with our hands interlocked, and her head on my shoulder—drinking in her words, and trying in vain to harden my lips into "madam" once more—to give stern counsel—and withdraw from her embrace.

Mohun—now a very white, fat old man, but Mohun still—came once or twice, and looked in. At last he came with clasped hands and said—"Highness! Didn't I tell you Master Derry grow fine gentleman and love his mother? But it is time to go now. Sowar very cross. Maybe the fong* come on us after Master Derry."

"Mohun is right," she said. "How time has passed! They will be uneasy about you. See, it is almost daybreak. You will come to see me, my son, wherever I am, before you leave India? And then, if I escape and am alive, we will see what can be done. If Fate wills we are not to meet, you will think of me with some pity? Will you not, Terence, my son? Mohun, let my son have my horse, and I will ride Jal. Nay, I have two here, Terence! And when you are on 'Flowing-water' you will have a beast fit for the son of the Ranee of Auripore. Alas! alas! that we must part!"

Was I weak or ought I to have torn myself out of the arms that were thrown around me, and turned away my face from the tearful kisses which fell upon my brow and neck?

It was indeed the dawn. Escorted by old Mohun, who bathed

my hand with his tears as he pointed out the way to the camp, I passed by a black-bearded sowar, on sentry. "Flowing-water" was, indeed, a beauty, but my saddle and housings were eccentric—gorgeous—and after a canter of a mile I espied with some uneasiness a small troop of cavalry approaching me. They quickened their pace. I had half a mind to put the Arab on his mettle, but thought better of it; and presently I was saluted by the officer in command of the party of Carabineers—"Is your name Brady, sir; surgeon Bengal Tigers?"

"Yes, it is."

"Why, there has been quite an alarm in camp about you, as you were, we hear, carried off once before! There are parties out in all directions! The Commissioner is in a great state, and so are the two young ladies."

"Two young ladies! What ladies?"

"You have not heard? All the women and children shut up in Beel arrived safe and sound last night. Miss Butler—a deuced fine girl—Sir Denis Desmond's niece, among them. What a splendid horse you're on! Rather a rum turn-out, isn't it?"

My heart fluttered with joy.

"I shall go into camp, and ease all anxiety about me. I suppose you will return with me?"

"No; not till we have been in Auripore. My orders are to go there and look for you."

"Here I am! no use in going now. I have just been there rummaging about the place."

"Well, perhaps you're right; but——"

My soul sank within me as a subaltern came up and said—"I think I can make out some rebel sowars sneaking away by the wall there. Look over there, Forster!"

The officer looked through his glass.

"Not a doubt of it!" he exclaimed. "Frank, it may be this very Ranee of Auripore Sir Denis is so anxious to get hold of! She's dodging somewhere in the neighbourhood. He has special orders from Government about her. Now, men, keep your horses well in hand. Make no prisoners unless you see a woman!"

The Carabineers were off in pursuit, and I was left alone staring after them overwhelmed. I relied on the vigilance of the sowars. I recollected it was some way from the palace to the outskirts of the town. The Carabineers were lost in a dip of the ground under Auripore. A pistol-shot—two! three! four! a little volley reached me. I touched Flowing-water with the stirrup edge, and away we slid over the plain. In the dip lay a dead Carabineer and a wounded sowar. Our men were just ahead of me after the enemy,

who had scattered over the plain to lead them away from an elephant which was making at full speed for the river.

Beside the elephant there were two natives riding close together. Even at that distance I recognized the Ranee and old Mohun. I saw she was poorly mounted now. Three of the Carabineers, singling out the party, dashed after them full speed. They gained on them. I urged my horse, and he flew like the lightning. Ah ! a trooper rises in his stirrups ! Poor old Mohun—he turned and drew his tulwar to save his mistress. I saw him with his white hair soaked in blood, as Flowing-water cleared him on the ground. I was close on the horsemen, the elephant, and the two Carabineers. The foremost, with a savage dig of his spur, struck at the Ranee as he brought up his horse alongside. The sword snapped in his hand. Ere he could recover, he fell wounded from his saddle, and the dauntless woman turning discharged the second barrel at the trooper close behind her.

“Stop !” I screamed. “Don’t fire ; it’s a woman ! Oh, Mother ! halt ! I am here ! For God’s sake——”

“Damn her ! she’s shot Sergeant Scales !”

I strove to dash the pistol aside. The bullet sped.

* * * * *

That I could ever shed tears for *her* ! That for a space in my life I should have no thought for my Mary—that I should forget her, and have no prayer to offer up to Heaven for her safety ! And kneel beside the idol of my early life, with all my boyish love back a hundredfold !—it seemed the strangest of all my dreams. And yet it was true !

“Terence, dear, do not give way so ! Oh, do not grieve, my son ! It is better it should be so. It is too late now to wish it, but I would have liked to have lived a little longer, and to have seen you and Mab once more. Was I not near getting away ? There is the Raptee ! There, you see, is Nepaul. Millions of miles away from me. Hearken, Terence ; the jewels belong to you. Oh, the pain !”

“I am glad,” she murmured, “you have a tear for me, after all. But the treasure ! Don’t let them take the treasure ! Mabel !—Forgive me my sins, oh Heaven !”

* * * * *

“Och then, Mick, wasn’t it a sin to shoot the poor lady ? Old Scales is as mad as any of us about it, though she put her mark on him. Did you ever see such a face as that before. And *that’s* the Ranee of Auri-pore ! Well ! I wouldn’t believe it if all the newspapers in India swore it, she ever did a cruel thing in her life. Oh, dear, dear ! isn’t the young doctor broken-hearted about her !”

CHAPTER LIV.

ANCHORED !

AS I bring my story—very strange, but very true—to a close, and think over the troubled years which were mine—as I call to mind the storms which the much-buffed ship, now moored in calm waters, has encountered—I can scarce believe that it is not all one of the many dreams I have dreamt in my life. And I look about me. There is Lough-na-Carra in the distance, and here is the ivy-crested tower of Kilmoyle, and before me are the scenes in which my childhood were spent ! A silver-haired, stern-faced old man sits in an easy-chair at the window, with his desk before him. He is writing a paper on “The Land Question in Ireland Considered, by Sir Denis Desmond, G.C.B.,” in which he “considers the question” as settled by the precedent and results of the former settlement of Auripore.

“Do you remember, Terence !” he calls out through the open window, “whether the Governor-General included Auripore in the second Oude settlement, when Outram recommended Maun Sing and the Eastern Talookdars to be guaranteed their rights by express regulations ?”

“I do not, Sir Denis—not exactly at this moment. I think Auripore came under the settlement, and was made over to the Kotwal of that village where we spent such a warm morning. Ask Mary ; she recollects everything.”

“And it is well I do, Terence,” says a young person near me. “It is nearly time to send over the carriage for Gerald and Rose—that is one thing I remember. *You* know I dread India and its memories, though so much happiness dates from that visit. By the bye, whilst you were at the river to-day—I really am disposed to think there’s a pet naiad somewhere in those salmon-pools—I had such a nice letter from Mabel ! She has sent me a photograph of their little son. Isn’t he pretty ? A look of Terry about him, I think, and he has his mother’s hair.” And here her voice sinks into a whisper as she looks towards Sir Denis, and puts her mouth very, very close to my cheek——

“Don’t be so ridiculous, Mary !”

“Why won’t you listen then, Terence ? Don’t interrupt !”—This is louder : then very low—“Mabel wishes to remind you of your promise to send her over the copy of the picture you had at school. She has not quite got over the shock of her father’s miserable fate. She will have it he did not commit suicide, but

that Azimoolah Khan and Feroze made away with him. Why do you always turn so pale when *he* is spoken of? And there is Mr. Bates shaking his head so. Poor Mabel! Otherwise she is happier than I could have anticipated; her husband's health and spirits improve gradually."

"Tell Mab it shall be sent the next steamer after she hears from us. Or, stay! Admiral Jack, you know, has sent us an invitation to go out to the North American station. It's only a step from Halifax to 'Babylon City, Cherubusco Co., Minnesota.' And near 'Babylon City' is 'Content,' where our exiles have hung up their harps. I think next month I shall go out and see them and carry the picture with me. It would be worth while going so far to see such a change in that contrite savage anti-Saxon Maurice."

Mary's eyes filled up as she said, softly, "I believe it was I who converted him to common sense and Christianity. Poor Colonel Prendergast! He was a patriot run mad. But as to your trip to Content, Terence, I warn you I am against it."

"Mary, you're a despot. Not to 'Content'?"

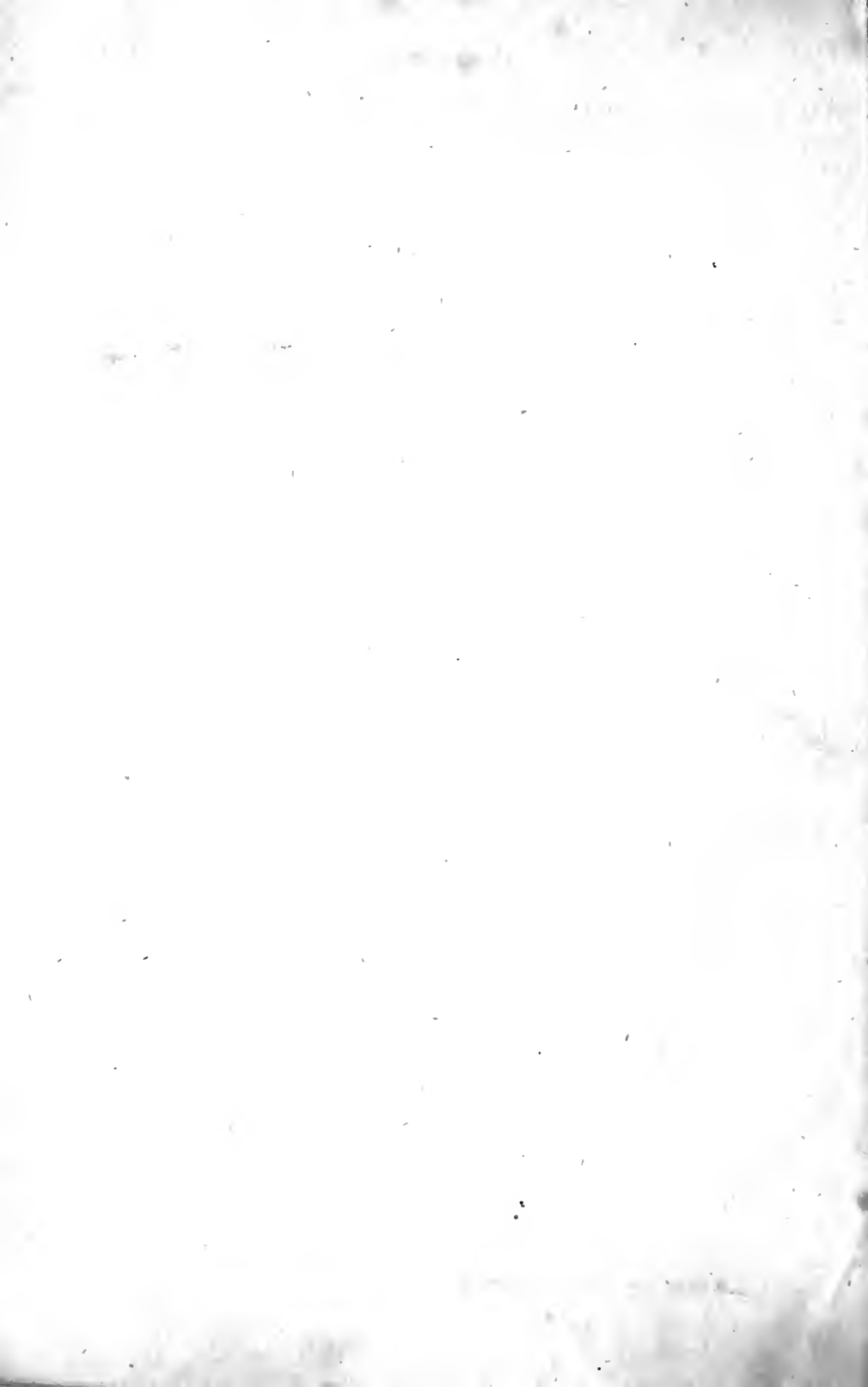
"No! If you go I will go too! And then what will Sir Denis do for his portable dictionary? And what will Mr. Bates do for his general referee? Besides, it's not necessary; Admiral Jack will soon be coming home to visit us. If Mabel and Maurice desire to see us, we can afford ourselves the treat, particularly if you don't keep up quite such an army of dependants and pensioners. Here comes Rose and Gerald."

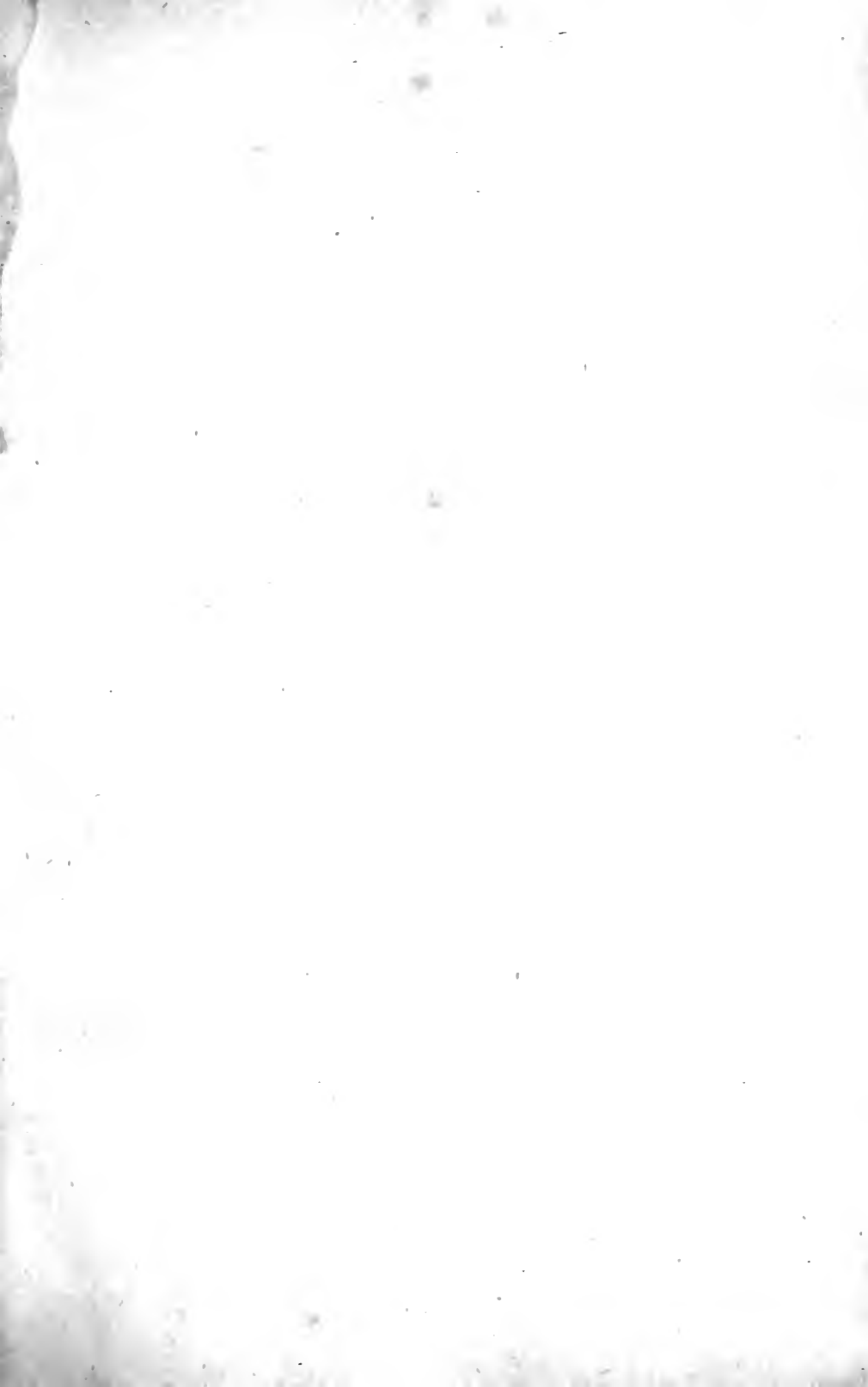
"But, Mary—come back for a moment—Admiral Jack says the fishing is——"

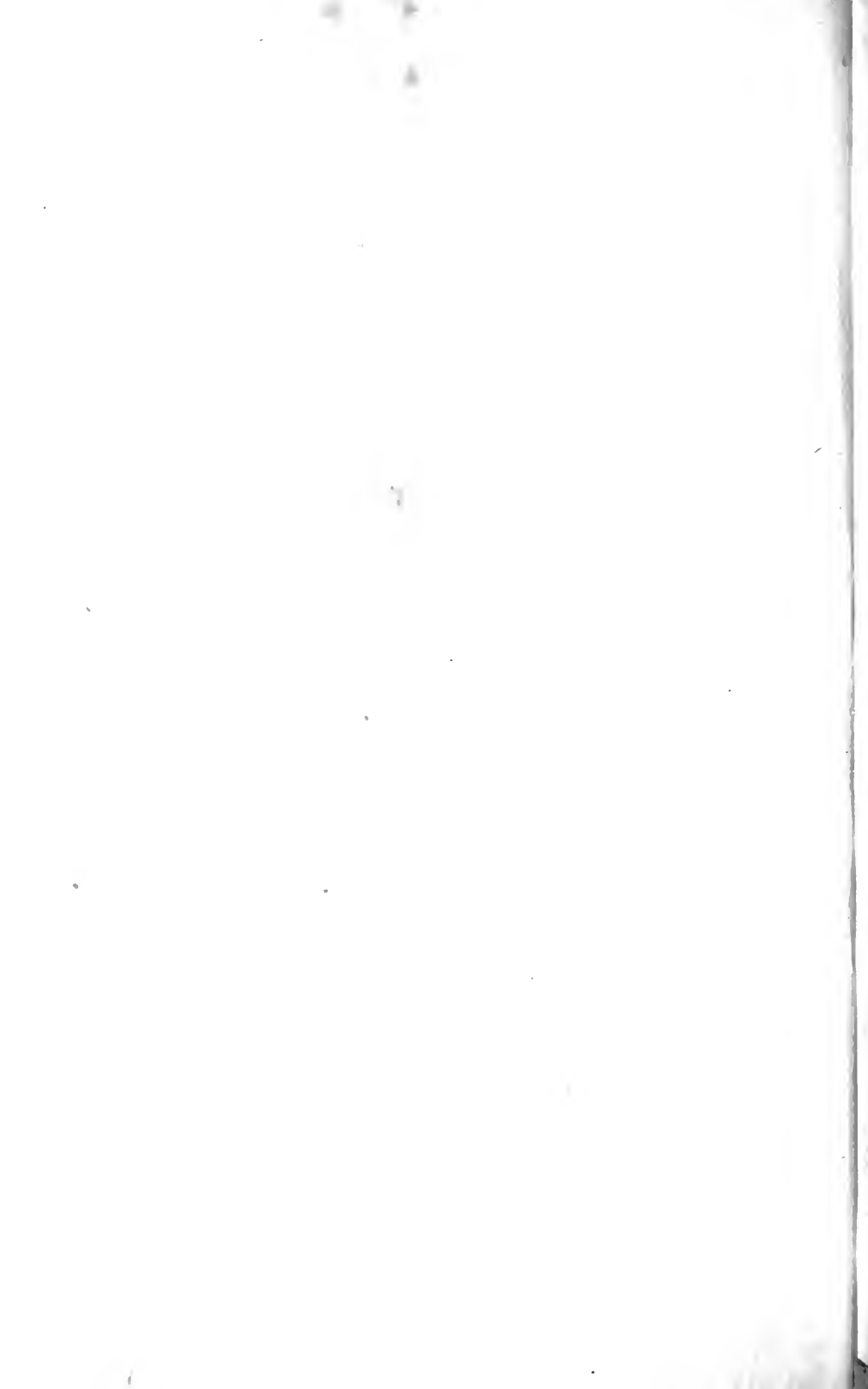
"No, Terence, you have had quite enough of fishing. And in such troubled waters too. Mr. Bates! *Don't* you agree with me?"

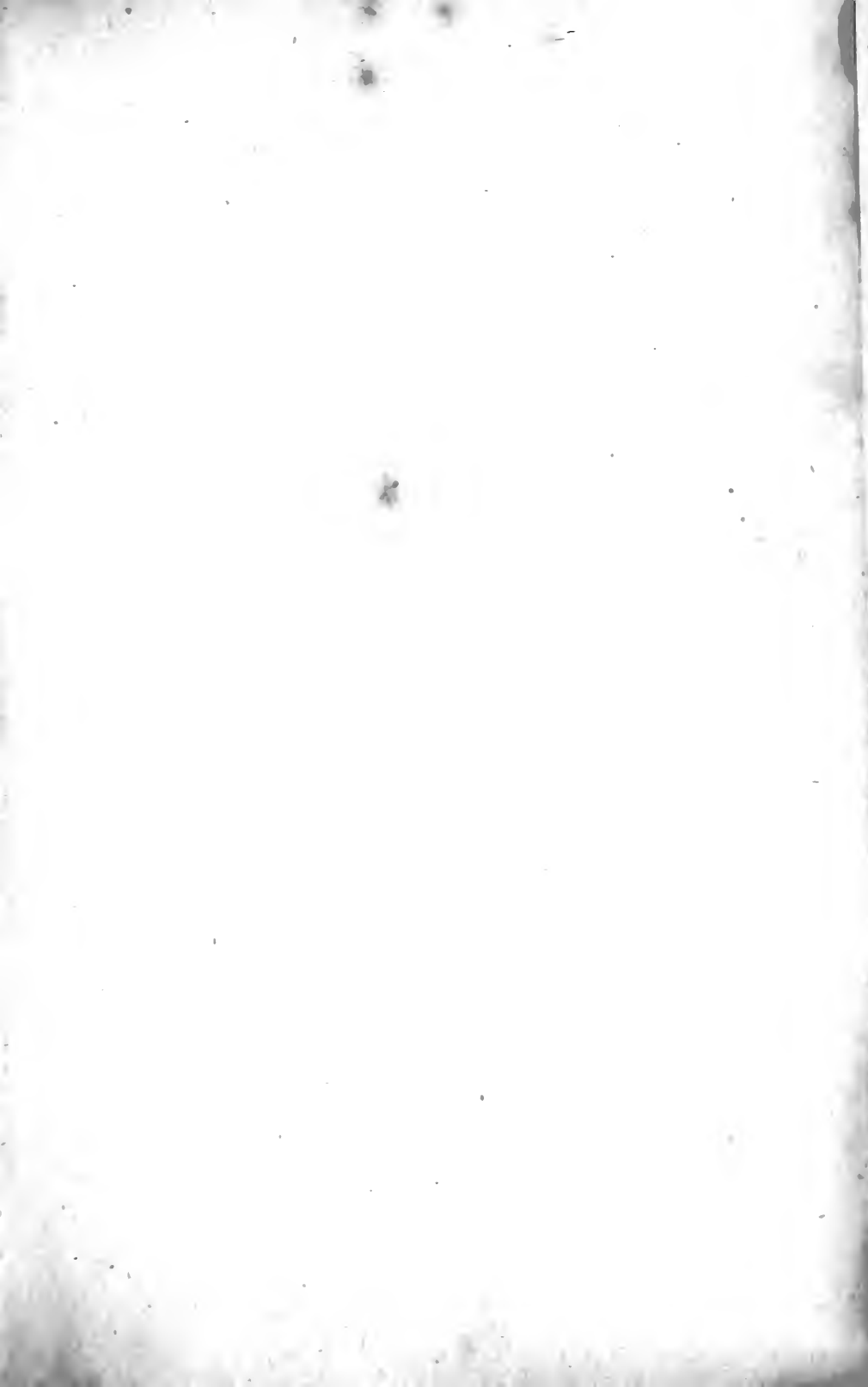
The old man smiles. "Agree with you! Can I ever do anything else? No, Terence! I'll help Mary to her writ of *ne exeat regno*. She and I think you have had enough of adventures to last you a lifetime. So does the baby! And so does Sir Denis. You are anchored at last."

THE END.



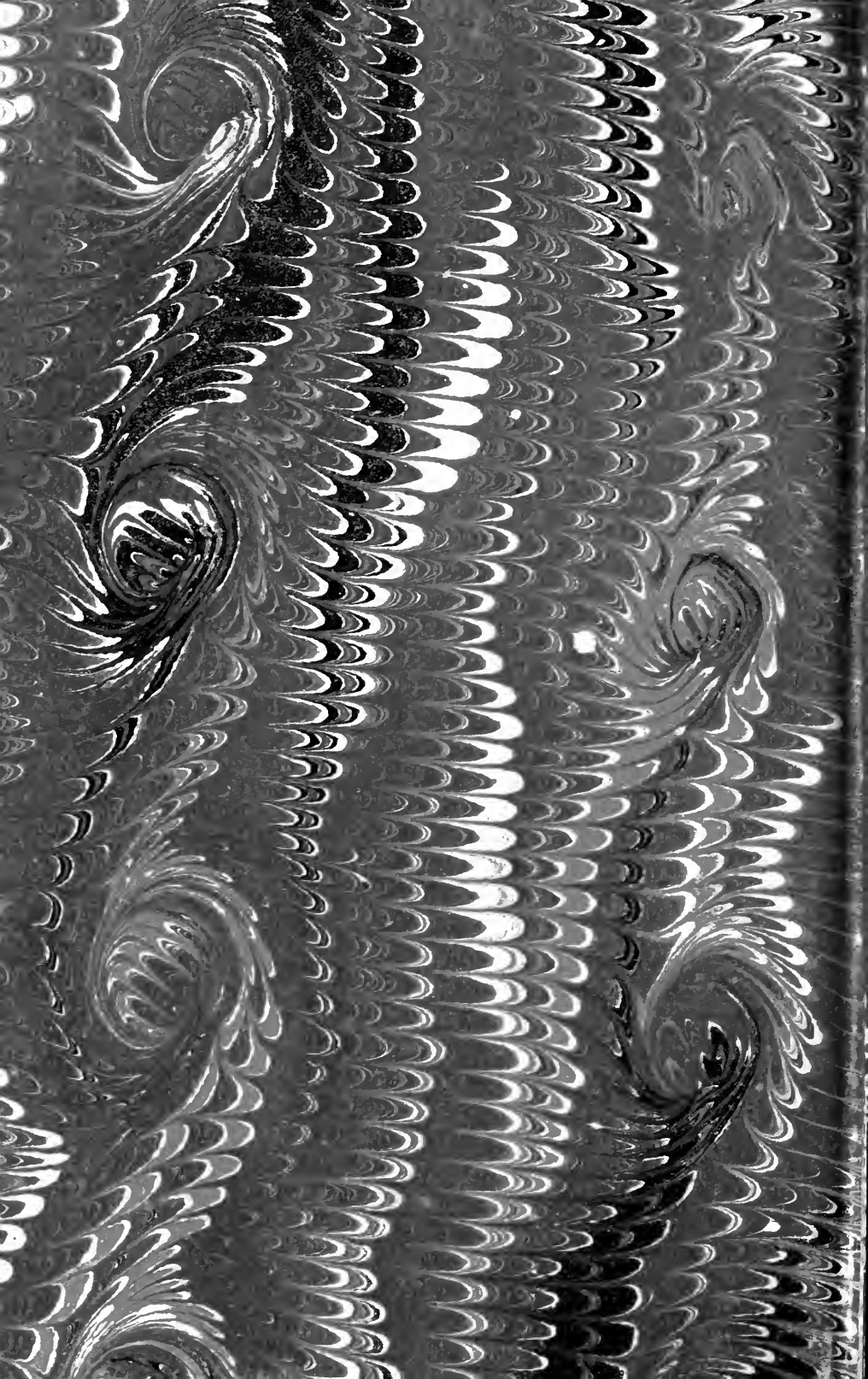








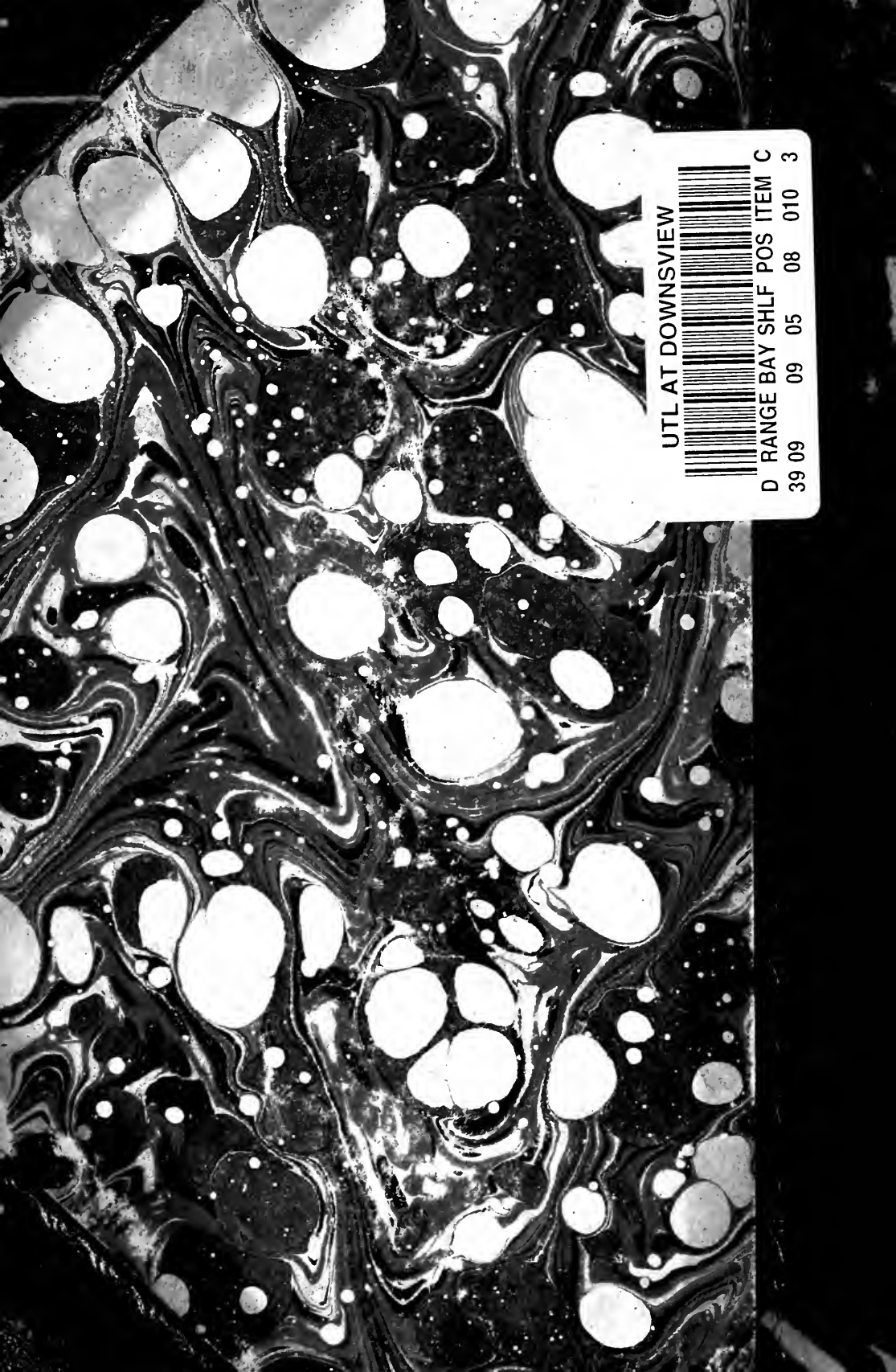




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